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WORLD WAR: Has It Begun?

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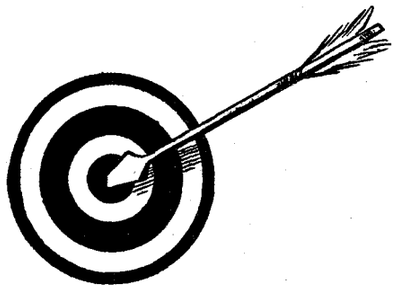

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New Masses

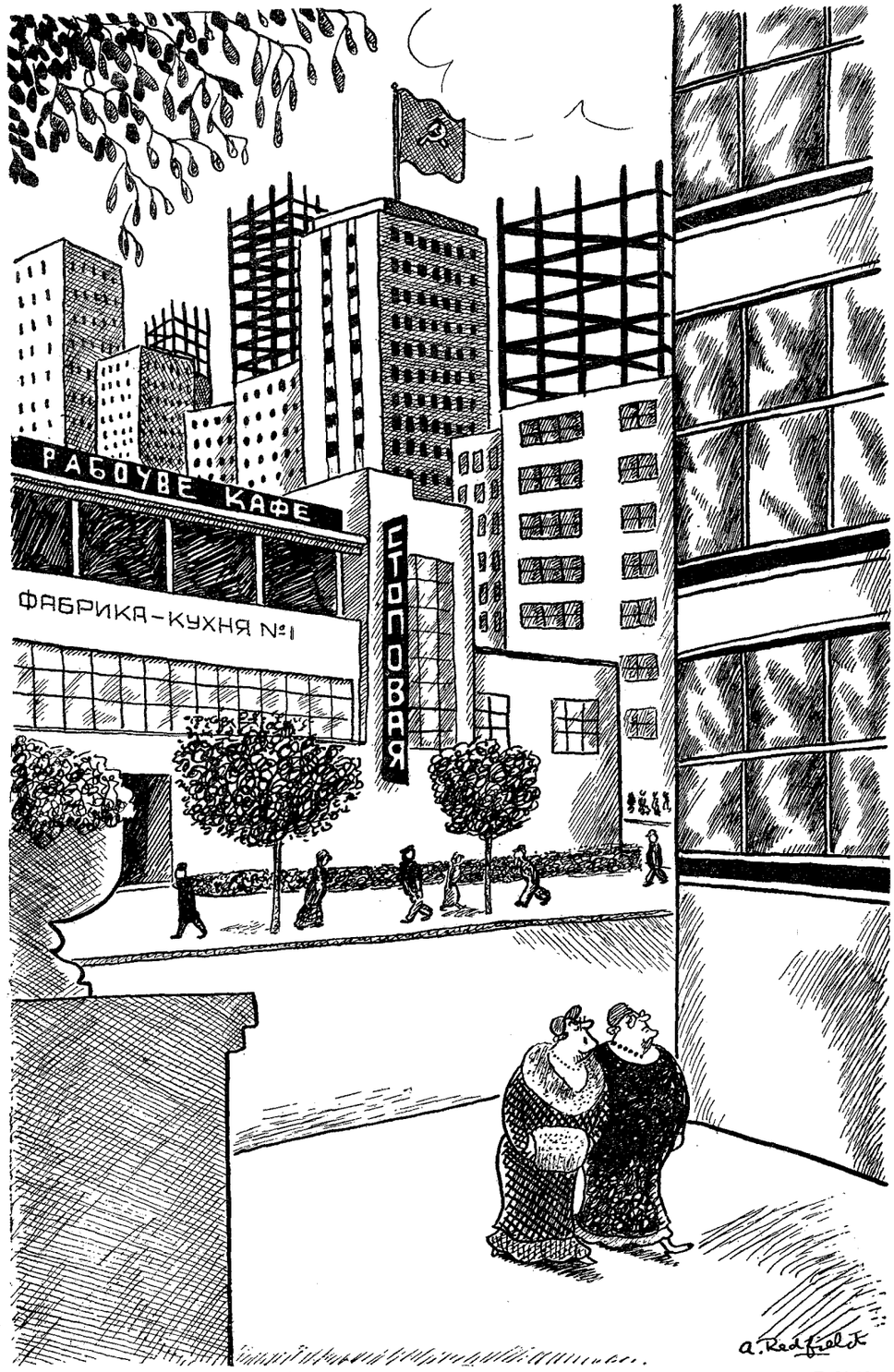
OCTOBER 15, 1935

The Comintern's Appeal

WAR is no longer a matter for debate; it is raging in Ethiopia and threatens to spread to Europe any day. Mussolini's legions in Africa have met with the initial success that was to be expected because of their superior arms. But the Ethiopians are putting up a stiff resistance; the fascist forces will meet with increasing difficulties as their lines of communication lengthen and the terrain becomes more unfavorable for the use of mechanized transport. After a study of the facts, the League of Nations Council has determined that Italy is the aggressor and the Assembly is being called upon to decide what form of sanctions shall be applied. France is playing a shrewd game and is utilizing the occasion to drive a hard bargain with England. The French replied to the English inquiry regarding naval support in the event of Italian resistance with a counter demand that England give the same guarantee in case of military moves on the continent. The war in Africa is the beginning of another struggle for colonies, with England determined to prevent Mussolini from obtaining possession of Ethiopia. Nazi Germany is preparing to use the occasion for an attack on Lithuania and Germany, Poland and Hungary are trying to fashion an offensive alliance. Japan's moves in the Far East show that her militarists are also awake to the possibility that this may be a strategic time for them to strike in China and Siberia.

IN AN effort to rally opponents of war, the Communist International has just issued an appeal to all workers' organizations and friends of peace urging immediate united action. Eight days prior to the beginning of military operations the Comintern issued a similar appeal to the Second International that has not yet been answered. The new appeal points out that not another moment must be lost:

> The governments of the biggest capitalist states represented in the League of Nations are again dooming it to impotence. The game of self-seeking interests of the imperialists is rendering collective action by the League impossible.



"I *STILL* DON'T BELIEVE IT!" *Redfield*

The Comintern is urging workers to take the initiative to make certain that Italy is prevented from obtaining war supplies of all kinds. Immediate action, it is pointed out, will mean "encircling Italy with an iron ring of isolation and smashing the war begun by it; it means a blow restraining all the fascist instigators of war who are preparing to follow the example of Italian fascism." In the United States the strength of peace sentiment has caused President Roosevelt to issue a neutrality proclamation asking citizens not to travel on boats of either belligerent. Since Ethiopia has no ships the proclamation hits at Italy alone. Another factor in the Roosevelt peace policy is the fear that Japan may seize the occasion to expand in the Pacific. For the moment at least the policy of American imperialism accords with the peace desires of the masses. But opponents of war cannot depend on such temporary alignments. If Italy is to be checkmated and war prevented from

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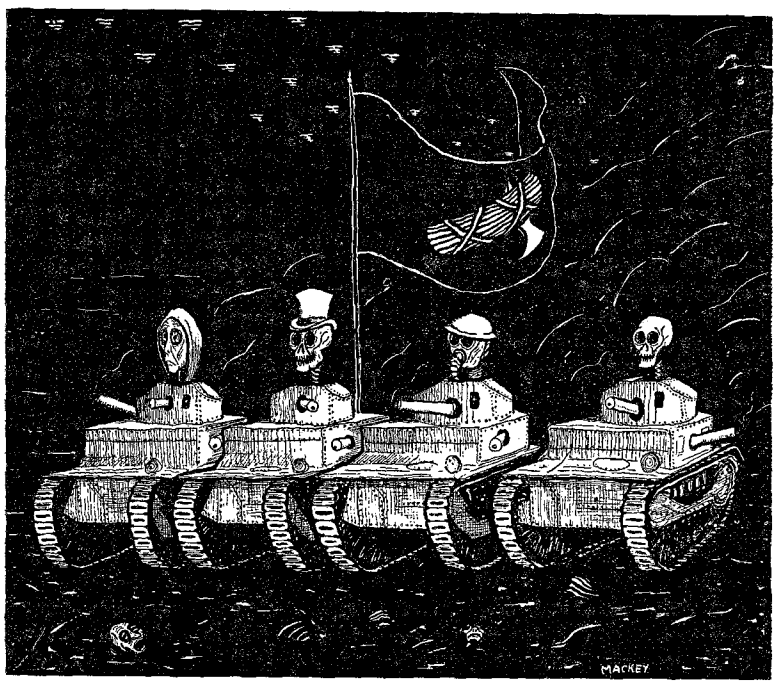

THE FOUR HORSEMEN RIDE AGAIN *Mackey*

spreading, Americans must demand the lifting of the embargo on arms for Ethiopia and the applications of sanctions to Italy with an embargo on shipments both of finished and raw materials to Mussolini.

The A.F.L. Convention Opens

LABOR throughout America, watching the proceedings at the fifty-fifth annual convention of the A. F. of L. in Atlantic City cannot but heartily acclaim William Green's anti-war declaration in his opening speech. Here, Mr. Green voiced the will of the overwhelming majority of the American people. However, when he came out flat-footed against the formation of a Labor Party at this time, the A. F. of L. leader is certainly not voicing the desire of millions of American workingmen today. Nor can he dodge the issue by pointing a finger toward Moscow and shouting his refusal to accept "dictation from a foreign country." He referred, of course, to the resolutions adopted by the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International favoring the formation of a mass Labor Party to forestall fascism and halt the outbreak of world hostilities. Mr. Green must decide whether he will accept the "dictation" of his proletarian countrymen from Peoria or Denver or Seattle. Even The New York Times admitted the strength of the pro-Labor Party sentiment in this country: "Formation of a labor party . . . will be pressed in a large number of resolutions by international unions, State Federations, city central labor bodies and local Federal unions." Mr. Green trod gingerly around another fundamental issue before the convention—the question of industrial unionism versus craft unionism. But he will not avoid these issues by digging his head in the sand; they are greater than Mr. Green or any individual leader, for the question of bread and butter is at stake. Greater men than Mr. Green have lost their power when they ignored that one fundamental issue.

Harvard Patrioteers

I do not see how I can possibly conform to a law which I believe violates my constitutional rights as a citizen and a teacher . . . I do not know what will be the consequences, but at present it is my intention to refuse to take the teachers' oath . . . This measure is aimed directly at freedom of thought . . . I have sworn to defend the Constitution several times as a member of the United States Geological Survey, and as a captain in the Officers' Reserve Corps . . . But in my capacity as a member of the faculty of Harvard University I am not an official of the government and never should I be so considered. Teaching in an institution like Harvard must not become a state function. If it does, education is doomed to stagnation and the twilight of democracy will deepen into blackest night.

—DR. KIRTLEY F. MATHER.

WHEN Kirtley F. Mather, Harvard geology professor and Boston liberal, signified last week his intention to refuse to take the oath of allegiance to the constitution, required of all Massachusetts teachers under the new state law, he threw the reactionaries into complete confusion. For the much-disputed Teachers' Oath Act, passed last spring in the teeth of bitter opposition from liberal and radical groups, provides no penalty for refusal to conform. Representative Dorgan of Dorchester, sponsor of the bill, so admitted, and after unsuccessfully attempting to break up an educators' meeting at which Mather presided, announced he would file a bill in the next legislature that would "put teeth" into the oath law. President Marsh of Boston University urged faculty members to sign the oath. Harvey Gruver, Superintendent of Schools in Lynn, paused in his valiant attempt to expel an 8-year old schoolboy for refusal to salute the flag long enough to announce that Lynn teachers would be required to take the oath individually, "in order to learn the identity of those teachers, if any, who intend to evade taking the oath." Brookline High School students, headed by the faculty, were marched onto the playground and ordered to salute the flag as the band played "The Star-Spangled Banner." Leverett Saltonstall, blue-blood Speaker of the House, originally an opponent of the bill, criticized Mather's stand, as the D.A.R. yapped and patrioteers burst into a full-throated bay.

ON the other hand, Mather had considerable support among his colleagues. Some 200 members of the Harvard faculty were reported to be behind him, including internationally-known specialists in the fields of philosophy, history and law; and petitions were circulated among the student body. Boston's 4,500 public-school teachers, who are to be administered the oath this week, discussed what to do, their eyes on Harvard. Many among the Harvard faculty were encouraged by the memory of the words of Harvard's new young president, Conant, who had stated at commencement that, whatever might be the form of government without, "thought within these walls shall remain free." Harvard was considerably stunned, therefore, when President Conant curtly announced that faculty members could take the oath—or quit. Unperturbed by the fact that the Oath Act is of doubtful constitutionality, especially as applied to private institutions such as Harvard, he exceeded the wildest dreams of reac-

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tionaries by supplying the Oath Act with the teeth it lacked. In a prepared statement, he said, "It is out of the question for Harvard University, as an institution, to consider not obeying the law," and enlarged on his statement to reporters by promising that any faculty member refusing to take the oath will be told he cannot continue to teach at Harvard. In the face of Conant's ultimatum, Mather has announced he would sign the oath, basing his decision on the legal point that the mandatory instrument for enforcement is, under the terms of the Act, Harvard University and not the courts of Massachusetts. Just how Harvard could legally enforce a measure for which no penalty is provided is a delicate legal question which might be of considerable interest to, say, the editors of The Harvard Law Review. But it is entirely irrelevant to the present question, which is quite simply this: Are professional patrioteers to bark and internationally-known men of science to wag their submissive tails? If Dr. Mather reaffirms his original stand, the support he receives will surprise and hearten him. If he meekly submits to Harvard's millions of dollars of tax-free holdings in Massachusetts speaking in the voice of Harvard's bland young "liberal" president, he will in some measure be guilty of contributing to the "deepening twilight of democracy" against which he warns.

The Army to the Rescue

OPEN alliance between the Army and the Works Progress Administration has now been completed. "By direction of the President, Major General E. M. Markham, Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army, has been designated as Engineering Consultant to the W.P.A. and the resources of the Corps of Engineers have been made available to the Works Progress Administration to facilitate its operations. The Consulting Field Engineers will shortly visit the areas to which they are assigned, and State Administrators are requested to afford them every facility for securing full information concerning the Works Program in each state, with particular regard to those obstacles or difficulties which are hampering the speedy development of the program." This is the latest Army game. We had the Army grabbing off a big share of the four billion dollars for uncamouflaged Army projects. Next it extended its sphere of influence to such apparently innocent projects as road building, and the development of Alaska. And now we have it, quite properly, detailing Lieut. Col. F. C. Harrington and a staff of eleven officers of the Corps of Engineers to the duty of seeing that all W.P.A. work is carried out in a soldierly manner. Perhaps Roosevelt, in his San Diego speech promising peace for the United States, was thinking of such extensions of power to our own Army.

C. R.'s Ally: The Klan

J. B. MATTHEWS, vice-president of Consumers' Research, told a group of subscribers a few weeks ago that vigilante mobs would soon attack the striking employes of Consumers' Research. On the morning of October 4, The Washington (N. J.) Star carried a letter signed simply "Disgusted Taxpayer," echoing the Red scare spread through the town by Matthews and demanding that civic organizations band together to run the leaders of the strike out of town. On the night of October 4, the Klu Klux Klan entered the picture with the burning of a twenty-foot cross on a hill overlooking Washington. Did Matthews go to the Klan? One cannot know. But whether or not he did his continued efforts to incite the townspeople against the strike leaders have borne fruit; he cannot avoid responsibility for making the Klan a newest ally of the C.R. management. A committee including Heywood Broun, Congressman Vito Marcantonio, Bruce Bliven, Margaret Marshall, Albion Hartwell, Rabbi Edward Israel and John Chamberlain is planning a public mass trial of Matthews and his strike-breaking colleague F. J. Schlink at Town Hall on the evening of October 24. The committee will do an important public service if it brings out the full story of the union-smashing and Red-baiting activities of the man who only a few months ago wrote: "There are many enemies of the working class today, the most dangerous of them all are those that bring professions of friendliness, like a flag of truce, only to gain a close vantage point for their determined attack."

Progress Notes

TRUE to the President's promise, the Federal Government is going out of "this business of relief." In six states the Federal Emergency Relief Administration has already boarded up its doors. On September 1 all direct relief was stopped in Alabama and Wyoming. Vermont came next, and on

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WILLIAM BROWDER, *Business Manager*

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September 30 the F.E.R.A. pridefully announced that "Indiana, Nevada and New Hampshire will receive no more Federal funds for relief." A stringy little woman, standing outside of her Alabama shanty, described life on the dole in three words. "We was breathin'," she said. What will keep millions of workers and farmers "breathin'" now that the dole has been cut off? The F.E.R.A. has a glib sounding answer: "The combination of works program employment for the employables on the relief rolls and the provision of State and local aid for the unemployables will take care of needy from now on." At best this is the wishful thinking of psychotics. More plausibly, it is an unvarnished lie, as even the fudged figures of government reports show. "Works Progress employment for the employables on the relief rolls" has put 194 former relief clients to work in Nevada. The remaining 2,600 of whom statistical cognizance is taken are from now on dropped from the President's reckoning. Are they all "unemployables?" Can the state and local authorities take care of them? These questions were not answered before F.E.R.A. shut its doors in Nevada.

The Dunckel Bill in Action

LAST May, THE NEW MASSES labelled Michigan's Dunckel Bill "the most sweeping challenge to labor in the whole campaign to outlaw all forms of protest against conditions in America." The Dunckel Bill is now in actual use as an instrument of repression. Detroit's police censor, Sergeant J. M. Koller, issued a permit to the Cinema Guild to show *The Youth of Maxim,* a Soviet film on Czarist oppression in Russia during 1906, which had been acclaimed by movie critics throughout America. But when the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Detroit Employers' Association, the University of Detroit and the American Party brought pressure on the sergeant, he suddenly revoked the permit under his newly-acquired powers granted by the Dunckel Bill. Sergeant Koller stated, "this film is Communist propaganda and should not be shown . . . there was a law passed by the last session of the legislature which took effect after I saw the picture under which I act now." But when asked what the name of the law might be, Koller replied, "I don't know the name of it. I haven't read a copy of the law." And he turned to Walter S. Reynolds, chairman of the subversive affairs committee of the American Legion for aid. Reynolds elaborated: "The law doesn't say film, newspaper, magazine or what. It says you can take anything that advocates overthrow of the government by force." How *The Youth of Maxim,* an historical account of events thirty years past, comes under this ban, the police do not specify. But the Dunckel Bill covers it—covers any suppression of civil liberties the "patriots" of Detroit endorse. But Detroit liberals, labor unionists, social and artistic leaders refuse to allow the Dunckel Bill to rob them of all rights. They have protested in the name of the Cinema Guild; in New York, The New Theater League, the Film and Photo League, The New Theater Magazine and the New Film Alliance are supporting their move by sending letters and telegrams of protest to Mr. Koller of Detroit.

The Gallup Trial Starts

THE trial judge, one James B. McGhee, remarked "I can't see why so much hell is being raised over a few Mexicans." As the day of the trial approached, the "United American Patriots"—a high-sounding name for vigilantes—launched a Red-baiting campaign. The state of New Mexico and the federal government cooperated in spreading the terror. Workers found with defense leaflets in their possession were forced across the Colorado border. Witnesses summoned by the defense have been deported; the wife of one defendant was arrested when she arrived in Aztec to testify. The stage is set in San Juan County for the "trial" of ten miners indicted for the murder of Sheriff Carmichael last April. The ten were among those protesting the eviction and arrest of miners from houses they had built themselves. They had asked for relief. And when the deputies opened fire on unarmed men and women gathered peacefully to insist on the rights of fellow workers, Sheriff Carmichael fell dead with a bullet in his head from the gun of one of his own deputies—while the other officers murdered two miners.

SIXTY men and women are brought up on a charge of murder, although none was armed at the time of the shooting. Ten were held for trial; the deputies who shot the workers were allowed to go free. In a lynch atmosphere comparable to Scottsboro, ten miners are brought before a reactionary, labor-hating judge who has intimated that his mind is made up before the case is tried. Against him is arrayed a formidable group, including the International Labor Defense, the American Civil Liberties Union, lawyers from the offices of "Wild Bill" Donovan, well-known New York attorney. A. F. of L. unions and liberal and worker organizations demand fair trial and refuse to tolerate the railroading of workers to jail because the owners who control the state want to be rid of militant leaders. To back the defense, the lawyers for the miners ask for protests to the judge, the attorney-general of New Mexico, the governor. They ask that all unions and mass organizations back up their fight for the liberation of the Gallup miners. As Robert Minor warned, the ten defendants must not be made into ten Mooneys, "legally" lynched by the reactionary powers of New Mexico.

The Shopkeeper Strikes

THE small shopkeeper has much the same interest as the worker in the fight against high prices and the profit-squeezing of the large wholesaler. Last summer, the meat strike saw the owner of the corner meat market and the housewife cooperating to bring down the exorbitant price of meat. Unfortunately, in some cases, the mutuality of interest was not sufficiently understood; organizations of housewives failed to maintain close contact with the butchers, who became discouraged and opened their shops before the strike had gained the momentum necessary for a successful struggle. At the present time, 800 retail fish dealers have tied up the Peck Slip in New York City in protest against the high price of fresh-water fish demanded by large wholesalers. Picketing successfully closed the markets; it was extended to the pushcart markets nearer the center of the city. Housewives' organizations are urged to join the picket lines in the event the strike becomes a protracted fight. High prices menace the best interest of workers, who cannot afford to buy and of small shopkeepers, who suffer from lack of buyers. The cooperation of the buyer and the small merchant against the large wholesalers who bear down on both will force reasonable prices and will be the basis for united action for mutual interest in other struggles affecting each group.

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The Making of a Revolutionary

FIFTEEN years ago the workers of Moscow buried beside the Kremlin wall, in the spot sacred to revolutionary heroes, the body of an American. It was the body of John Reed, the Harvard playboy who wrote the best report of the Russian revolution and helped to found organized Communism in the United States.

Reed's story is so unusual and yet so truly representative that it deserves to be told and retold. It is unusual not merely because of his background —the good, respectable Oregon family, the fashionable preparatory school, the Gold Coast at Harvard—but because he was, when he came out of Harvard in 1910, what his friends called him, a playboy, eager for adventure, fond of mad exploits, reckless, carefree, undisciplined. And it is representative because John Reed wanted from life just what so many writers of today want who have followed him into the revolutionary movement and learned, in much the same way they have, that his desires could be fulfilled only in a new social order.

The John Reed who graduated from Harvard in the same class as Hamilton Fish, Walter Lippmann and T. S. Eliot was a young man of enormous energy, vast ambition and the sensitiveness of a poet. He was so constructed that he could learn only by experience, but he could learn. What he chiefly wanted was literary success, and it took him a year or two to discover the meaninglessness of writing for Collier's, The American and The Saturday Evening Post. He also discovered, because his vast curiosity about life took him into every corner of New York, that there were such things as exploitation and poverty, and that he belonged to a very small, highly privileged minority. Together, the two discoveries set him to contributing to the newly-founded Masses.

He was still a long way from radicalism, but one day in April, 1913, he went over to Paterson to observe the silk strike. He was arrested, went to jail, saw what the strikers were up against and was heart and soul with them. He organized the Paterson pageant, bringing the strike to Madison Square Garden that the world might know what the class struggle was. He joined the I.W.W., but he spent the next summer in a villa in Italy. After all, he was a poet; he wanted all experience; the battles of labor were only a small part of life.

The following winter he went to Mexico and spent three months with Villa's army. Mexico made his reputation as a journalist, but it taught him little about revolutions. His sympathies were wholly with the peons and with Villa because he was a courageous man and the peons loved him. But he was interested in colors and surfaces and emotions, not in economic forces.

The World War was a different matter. Reed spent four months in France, England and Germany, and seven months on the eastern front. From the first he had no illusions about what he called "this traders' war," and what he actually saw of its horrors, of what it did to men's minds as well as their bodies, coupled with what he knew of its futility, brought him back to America, saying, "This is not our war!"

During 1916 Reed was one of those who fought American participation in the war and he came to understand the forces he was opposing, the bankers and the munition-makers. The whole picture fitted together now; the system that created the East Side slums and that killed strikers in Paterson, Ludlow and Bayonne was the system that made war inevitable. Everything in him cried out for its destruction, but who could destroy it? Could and would the workers shake off their lethargy and docility and realize their power? The collapse of the Second International and the belligerent patriotism of A.F. of L. leaders made him wonder.

Fortunately he was to see for himself. He arrived in Russia just after the defeat of Kornilov in September, 1917, and remained until just before the signing of the Brest-Litovsk treaty. He went everywhere, saw everything. And he understood. The East Side, Paterson, Mexico, the western front and the eastern, the United States at war—these had prepared him. And with John Reed, all his life, to understand was to act.

Reed was a poet, not a professional revolutionary. It was true that he had written relatively little poetry in the four years since his arrest in Paterson, but his mind was the mind of a poet. He had written little because, in the first place, he was so occupied with other things and, in the second place, because he was slowly developing from narrowness and imitation into breadth and originality. Growth as a poet went hand in hand with the discovery that the world had to be changed and that he had to play a part in changing it. Delayed for two months in Christiania, on his way back from Russia, he wrote "America, 1918." It marked a new beginning, but it was, except for a few fragments, the last poem he wrote.

Arrived at maturity as a poet, Reed found that there was no time for the writing of poetry. America knew almost nothing about the Russian revolution, and it was his responsibility to tell what he had seen. So he spoke at scores of meetings and wrote dozens of articles and finally, when the government returned to him the notes and documents it had confiscated, he wrote *Ten Days That Shook the World.*

But telling what had happened in Russia was not enough. There were revolutionaries in America, too, and they needed Reed because he had seen and understood the Russian revolution. He became a leader of the left wing of the Socialist Party, a contributing-editor of The Revolutionary Age, editor of The New York Communist, editor of The Voice of Labor. And when the left wing broke away, he was made an official of the Communist Labor Party, one of the two parties that subsequently combined to form the Communist Party.

It was on a mission for the Communist Labor Party that he went to Russia in 1919, by the perilous underground route. He saw Russia in famine and civil war, and learned to admire more than ever its workers and peasants and their leaders. Trying to return to the United States on another mission, he was captured, and spent thirteen weeks in solitary confinement in a Finnish jail. Back in Russia, he attended the second congress of the Communist International, served on various of its commissions, and was elected to its executive committee. He went to Baku for the Congress of Oriental Nations, caught typhus and died.

Not long before he fell ill, Reed told a friend that he wanted "to get this

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thing cleaned up and write poetry." Those who think of Reed still as just a playboy may find it significant that he regarded poetry as primary and revolution only as a necessary evil—something to be cleaned up as quickly as possible. But that is the way all Communists feel. "John Reed," some one has written, "put life ahead of revolution." But all Communists do. Revolution is for the sake of life. Capitalism must be destroyed because its power is the power of death. Once that is done. . . .

John Reed might have written great revolutionary poetry, but there was a specific revolutionary duty that he alone could perform and in performing it he died. Not every Communist writer is called upon to become an organizer, but there have been and there will be again situations in which only action can serve the cause of literature. In such a situation John Reed postponed poetry—forever, as it happened—but his name will be remembered when the poets of his generation are mentioned only in footnotes in the history of capitalist decay.

Earl Browder Reports

WHEN Earl Browder, General Secretary of the Communist Party of the United States, rose in Madison Square Garden to make his report of the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International, the audience rose with him. The roar of greeting had greater significance than that of an expression of enthusiasm for a powerful and respected working-class leader. For on that night of October 3, 1935, Earl Browder was the spokesman of all opposed to fascism, all who are outraged by the Italian invasion of Ethiopia and forsee a new imperialist world war.

The historic importance of the program enunciated cannot be overstressed: a new impetus was given to the ever-broadening united front whose program invites all anti-fascists to participate in action designed to prevent the coming of war and fascism and to protect the vital interests of the masses of American workers, intellectuals, white-collar and middle-class groups.

Just two days before the meeting, Italian legions invaded Ethiopia. Browder declared:

> A new repartition of the world has already begun. . . . The chief factor in the struggle for world peace, the factor which has prevented the outbreak of war up to now, is the policy of the Soviet Union. . . . As against those imperialist powers, which have placed their stake on war for immediate redistribution of the world (Italy, Germany, Japan, Poland, Hungary), there is a tendency among a number of other countries to maintain the status quo, to postpone the outbreak of war. . . . The most favorable factor in the present situation for Ethiopia is that this peace front, organized around the policy of the Soviet Union, makes possible the rallying of enormous forces throughout the world under the slogan: Hands Off Ethiopia!

The united front must be made the spearhead against unprovoked Italian aggression. It must be made the spearhead against the encroachment of fascism in other countries. For the invasion of Ethiopia, as Browder reiterated, illustrates the truth of the decision of the Seventh World Congress: "Fascism means war; Socialism means peace."

There are five factors, the Seventh Congress declared, which determine the alignment of class forces in the struggle against fascism:

> 1. The final and irrevocable victory of socialism in the Soviet Union.
> 2. The most far-reaching and prolonged economic crisis in the history of capitalism.
> 3. The offensive of fascism, its rise to power in Germany, the assault against Ethiopia, the consequent growth of the danger of a new imperialist world war and an attack on the U. S. S. R.
> 4. The political crisis, expressed in the Austrian and Spanish struggles, in the People's Front movement against fascism in France.
> 5. The revolutionization of the masses throughout the whole capitalist world, the powerful movement for unity of action among the workers, the growth of the revolutionary movement in colonial countries and the extension of the Chinese Soviets.

Capitalism, faced with the ever increasing difficulty of holding power in view of the discontent and resentment of the masses, resorts to fascism—the open terrorist rule of the most reactionary element of monopoly capitalism. With this in mind, the Seventh Congress resolved: "the immediate task of the international labor movement is to establish the united fighting front of the working class."

Furthermore, it is

> the duty of every Communist Party . . . to apply the united front tactic *in a new manner,* seeking by all means to reach agreements with the organizations of the toilers of all political trends for joint action, on a factory, local, district, national and international scale.

The realization of such a program differs in detail in each country. In America, the Labor Party, even before the Congress, was brought forward as the political instrument of this broad mass front. Browder continued:

> Especially must we listen to every voice expressing that burning desire of the masses for measures directed towards reopening the closed factories, for putting the masses back to work, producing the things that the masses need. . . . We will support such a party. . . . The Communists are even prepared for practical participation in such a government [of the People's Front].

But this policy is not, as the "old-guard" Socialists insist, an acceptance of the theory of the "lesser evil." While that theory was a justification of submission to one section of the ruling class and so bulwarking capitalism, in contrast, the united front policy is a further stage in the mobilization of the masses for *active* defence of their own class interests.

Such a defence has many implications: the necessity of struggle for Negro rights, the fight for equal opportunity, equal participation in government without discrimination of all minority peoples. The united front must draw in all elements, must cement a working basis with the Socialist and Farmer-Labor parties and with all elements who are sincerely opposed to the growth of fascism. The united front must defend the civil liberties granted by bourgeois democracy but swept away by the finance capitalists in their drive toward fascism; it must resist the lowering of the living standard of workers and middle-class and white-collar groups. It is through such active struggle that the base is laid for the ultimate liberation of the working class and its allies.

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BUSINESS IS PICKING UP!

William Gropper

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A WORLD WAR:

France's "Neutral" Fascists Really Seek War; The People's Front Demands Action for Peace

ILYA EHRENBOURG

PARIS, Oct. 5.

THE real people of Paris were gathered here. "Fascism means war," Professor Longevin said. A one-armed veteran sat at my side. Clenching his remaining fist he breaks into a shout, "Hail the Ethiopian people now fighting for freedom! Long live the Italian people, whose struggle for freedom is yet to come."

Police jam the hall, their trucks lined up outside. Just as France herself is surrounded by fascist hordes, so this hall, housing a meeting to protest injustice, is enriched by fascist gendarmerie.

I walk down the street, the night wind scattering newspapers which the excited Parisians are tossing away. The paper smells not merely of fresh ink. "1,700 Ethiopians killed and wounded! Hospitals bombed! Women and children perish!"

A crowd of young men approaches, marching arrogantly. Needless to say the police won't interfere with them. I know these rounded and well-groomed faces. February, 1934, these same young blades burned news-stands, slashed horses with their razors. While police protected them, they fired into the ranks of the workingmen. Calling themselves young patriots, they are lynchers by inclination and instinct.

They march through the deserted streets of tense and frightened Paris, shouting "Peace and neutrality for France!"

Liars! Hypocrites! You French fascists do not seek peace. You want war. You do not cultivate your gardens of a morning, but march to the galleries for rifle practice. This is your patriotism — to mow down French workers. At this moment you pray for Italy's victory. You fascists of France, with your demented academicians, your poets who tinkle on decrepit lyres inspired by Italian lira, today you hail Italian fascism as the bearer of Western culture.

Hands that never grasped a rifle, hands capable only of holding a pen to scribble what they are ordered, now greet the aviators whose planes, adorned with the insignia of the death's head, rain bombs on humble women in Adowa.

Yesterday Italian volunteers left for the front from Nice, the town of luxury and poverty, the town of bourgeois delight. Spies, gamblers, gigolos, who have been hunting rich and sex-starved American heiresses before the crisis, now gathered at all the cross-roads to shout "Nice must be returned to Italy!" The volunteers were tendered a farewell by their blood-brothers, the Camelots du Roi of France, by the Russian White Guards headed by an emigré princelet who grandiloquently describes himself as Grand Duke Dmitri. The tribe of pogromists and assassins followed the banner of the skull and bones.

Nothing remains in their rotten hearts but the emotion of hatred. They have been rattling the saber too long. Now the guns begin to pop off by themselves.

On the other side of the French frontier other youngsters are on the march—the pagans of Nuremberg, the friends of Italian fascism. They too smell booty. If the sons of Mussolini can drop bombs on Adowa why cannot the nephews of Goering drop bombs, let us say, on Memel. Dr. Goebbels painstakingly copies the Italian newspapers and writes that the Lithuanians are barbarous slave-owners. Paris is frightened for Memel is nearer than Ethiopia.

And who can tell now what will follow Memel? Eupen? Strassbourg? Thus, and this is not the first time, super-patriots sell their patrimony. Tomorrow, the descendants of Thiers who sought Prussia's aid to suppress the Commune, will seek allies from among anyone who will suppress the proletariat.

What do their papers write about? Whom do they fear? The Italian dictator and his gangs? Hitler?

No, their enemy is the People's Front, those who want real peace.

The destiny of France is now in the hands of the workers, the peasants, the intellectuals, the middle classes.

"Peace is indivisible," Litvinov said at Geneva. A hundred million people heard these words, ponder over them. Paris is gloomy today because these saviors of Western culture have handed a severe blow to Peace Indivisible. And what of tomorrow?

Mothers are weeping as they accompany their youngsters to the army transports under the blue skies of Naples. Their young are being led to slaughter and to be slaughtered. After their death, the clown Marinetti will write poetry in an orange-pink, vertical style and the soft-brained D'Annunzio will shout in their honor and fire off a few cap-pistols. And some gloomy satirists will echo: "See Naples and die."

In Ethiopia people scurry like hens at the sight of hawks as air squadrons rain their bombs.

Disgusted, I throw the paper away. Lies! Lies! The benefactors of humanity, the capitalists, have brought us to this, today, now, 1935!

How desperate and hopeless life would seem were it not for the one-sixth of the globe where even criminals, instead of throwing bombs on helpless people, build canals; where workers, instead of being herded like sheep for the abattoir, sing, laugh, love and live a life of human dignity!

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HAS IT BEGUN?

English and French Governments Can Stop Mussolini Without Causing a War with Italy

JOHN STRACHEY

LONDON, Oct. 5.

IT IS possible that the Italian fascists' attack upon Ethiopia will lead to a European war this autumn, but it is not probable. The possibility lies in the fact that once guns have begun to go off, no one can quite control the consequences. The improbability lies in the fact that the more important capitalist governments do not intend a European war at the moment. On the other hand, the refusal of the British and French governments to do anything effective to stop the fascist aggression will almost certainly, unless it can be overcome by the pressure of the British and French peoples, lead to a general European war within a few years.

The job of everyone in this situation is to try by every means in his power to stop the Italian fascists from carrying through one of the most bestial imperialist adventures that has ever been attempted. Nor can this duty be evaded because every other imperialist government including his own has committed equally atrocious acts in the past and may well do so again in the future. But those who do not follow the lead of the Communist International have fallen into the most extraordinary confusion: they feel that their efforts to stop the fascists must be paralyzed by the fact that the British government, also for its own imperialist reasons, half wishes to stop the fascists itself. We have in Britain many pacifists of what we call the "unco' good" variety. These ladies and gentlemen are so moral that they will not demand that their government should stop Mussolini for fear it may do so. An old trade-union leader gave the best answer to this that I have yet seen: "Must we not ask for two bob on our wages for fear we get it?"

Unfortunately, however, there is very little immediate chance of the British and French workers forcing their governments to apply sufficiently effective sanctions to stop Mussolini. The British and French governments are so sympathetic with fascism, so frightened of bringing Mussolini down and so hostile to each other that even their considerable interests in preventing the fascist adventure and the pressure of their own peoples will not, I'm afraid, be sufficient to make them act effectively now.

There is not the slightest doubt that Britain and France could stop Mussolini tomorrow and could do so without a war with Italy. People who think that Mussolini or anyone else could lead the Italian people into a war against France and Britain combined are so ignorant of political and military realities that it is hard to argue with them. If Mussolini asked the Italian people (who if they are by no means so martial as he pretends are no fools) to engage in such a war, he would be torn to pieces.

Nor is there anything in the idea that Germany would come to Italy's assistance in such a war. Germany with only Italy as her ally will certainly not fight Britain, France and the Soviet Union combined. Germany's whole and all too-successful diplomatic policy is designed to neutralize Britain. Effective use of sanctions against Italy would certainly stop the Ethiopian war and prevent it spreading to Europe. But sanctions might also bring down the fascist regime in Italy and that is probably the principal reason why there is little chance of their being applied.

On the other hand, the danger of the war spreading to Europe if Mussolini is allowed a free hand is undeniably considerable. The Italian forces may become so deeply engaged in Africa and the League so weakened that Germany may consider the moment ripe for an attack on Memel or Austria and then anything may happen. For if nothing is done to stop Mussolini now, notice will have been given to every potential aggressor that there is no effective coalition of powers that will combine against any state which breaks the peace.

Americans will in my view be serving both the cause of peace and the interests of the working class all over the world if they demand that their government support the application of any sanctions which the League of Nations may be induced to impose upon Italy. If the American government could be forced by public opinion to declare that it would cooperate with the League states in prohibiting all economic and financial intercourse with Italy, one excuse for inaction would be taken away from the French and British governments.

JOHN STRACHEY

will contribute a weekly dispatch by cable to

THE NEW MASSES, *analyzing the new developments in the war crisis*

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Hot Cargo on the Coast

AMY SCHECHTER

SAN FRANCISCO.

"THE shipowners are moving in on us," is the word along the San Francisco waterfront. The situation is the tensest since the general strike. A membership meeting of Local 38-79 of the International Longshoremen's Association of which Harry Bridges, leader of the general strike, is president, has just voted confidence in its leadership, voted to delegate emergency powers to its leadership and voted to empower its leadership to call a special meeting of the local any time the necessity arises.

The meeting sent greetings of solidarity to the Gulf port strikers. Harry Bridges reported on the status of the present controversy with the waterfront Employers' Association, dealing with the mass blacklist instituted against the members of Local 38-79 following their refusal to handle "hot" or scab cargo; and the violation of the employers' agreement with the local providing for the hiring of all longshore gangs through the union dispatching hall. Bridges stated that the shipowners must be tied down on the dispatching-hall question before the union will consider other controversial questions. He condemned the provocative union-smashing tactics of the Waterfront Employers' Association directed toward breaking up the Pacific Coast Maritime Federation and especially Local 38-79 of the I. L. A.

The shipowners are playing a slick game. Several days before their agreement with the I. L. A. was due to expire (September 30), they agreed to its renewal with a fanfare of publicity designed to place them before the public as the righteous guardians of peace on the waterfront. But before the ink was dry on the contract they had began violating the spirit and letter of the agreement. They began baiting the longshoremen, trying in every possible way to create unrest in the union ranks, to undermine the prestige of the leaders and break the solidarity of the longshoremen with the seamen. The refusal of the shipowners to agree to the minor amendments to their agreement, requested by the International Seamen's Union, also affiliated to the Maritime Federation, is another factor aggravating the situation.

Under Bridges' leadership the San Francisco local of the I. L. A. which was instrumental in effecting the consolidation of the West Coast marine unions into the Maritime Federation, has carried on a constant struggle on the job through which it has maintained control over hiring and working conditions, has succeeded in effecting a drastic reduction in the loads handled by individual longshoremen and in bringing wages to a level far above the average for other ports. It has maintained a hardfisted independence in its relations with the shipowners. It is a center for support of militant movements such as the United Labor Ticket which is developing a powerful front in the fight against Hearstism and vigilantism in the Bay area, is running Redfern Mason, president of the San Francisco Newspaper Guild, against bloody Mayor Rossi in the coming elections. The local played a leading role in the convention of the California State Federation of Labor, held in San Diego two weeks ago, where for the first time an effective left wing was mobilized behind progressive measures.

The shipowners see that the example of Local 38-79 is a source of inspiration for longshoremen throughout the country, specifically for the Gulf coast strikers and is mobilizing nation-wide support in the drive to destroy the local and its leadership. The war situation is speeding up the drive. The shipowners cannot afford militant unions on the waterfront. Rich war cargoes are already falling to Pacific Coast shipowners. For weeks past vessels have been sailing out of San Francisco with heavy cargoes of beans, rice and canned goods from California agricultural and cannery areas consigned to Italian ports.

In an open communication to Judge M. C. Sloss, longshore arbitrator, issued prior to last night's meeting, Bridges stated the union position on the latest phase of the anti-union campaign as follows: "By what seems a preconceived plan to disrupt the waterfront peace of San Francisco and to instill the situation with tenseness and unrest, the Waterfront Employers' Association has taken action to disrupt the method and rules of dispatching gangs of longshoremen as provided for in the Arbitration Award of October 12 and in the rules governing the operation of the Joint Labor Relations Committee." He put the following questions to Sloss to be answered in the latter's decision scheduled to be handed down the coming Monday (October 7):

> 1. Can the employer create or use an agency to usurp the functions and duties of the joint dispatching hall and the dispatchers? (Union men elected by the local from its membership. A. S.)
> 2. Can the employers violate and totally disregard the rules agreed upon by the Joint Labor Relations Committee providing for the joint dispatching hall or rules in the award relating to the dispatching of gangs?

At the close of his communication to Sloss, Bridges declared that "unless the practices instituted by the Waterfront Employers' Association are stopped at once, the eventual result will be the tying up of the entire commerce of this port and will affect the livelihood of thousands of men."

Issues are so clear and feeling running so high on the waterfront that the reactionary William F. Lewis, heading the District Council of the I. L. A. was forced to state to the press today that the district will give the San Francisco local the fullest support in the present controversy.

The Waterfront Employers' Association is employing peculiarly filthy and malicious frameup tactics in its attempt to break up the splendid solidarity maintained by West Coast marine workers since the first days of the general strike. The main outline of the frameup is the following: For many weeks I. L. A. members have refused to handle "hot" cargo or scab from Vancouver, where a longshore strike of major significance is in its fourth month. They also have refused to handle cargo involved in strikes of I. L. A. bargemen, Locals 38-101 and 38-102, and the lockout of employes of the Santa Cruz Packing Company, members of I. L. A. Warehousemen 38-44, discharged for organizing in the I. L. A. and driven from company's warehouses at the point of guns.

On September 19 the officials of the River Lines, a notoriously anti-labor outfit belonging to the Waterfront Employers' Association and one of the three companies still stubbornly refusing to sign agreements with the bargemen's local although twenty-one companies have signed, openly declared through the columns of the press that the company was out to put the San Francisco longshoremen on the spot. They announced that two days later they intended to load the steamship Sutter with hot cargo and sprinkle this cargo in small amounts over every dock on the San Francisco waterfront and the East Bay docks.

The company was unable to get workers for the dirty job of handling this scab freight and depositing it on the piers and officials of the company were forced to handle it themselves. They had themselves deputized and landed the freight under the protection of guns. Employers demanded that on each dock this scab Sutter cargo be handled before any other cargo could be touched, even though in most cases this freight constituted only about five tons out of 1,000 tons or over on the dock.

As each gang refused to handle the hot cargo employers placed their names on the blacklist and called in another gang. Every gang they called refused and today, two weeks since the Sutter sailed into port, about 1,900 of the 3,500 members of the I. L. A. Local 38-79 are blacklisted.[1] In order to

[1] Through the mass pressure and militancy of the longshoremen, the Waterfront Employers have been forced (October 6) to reinstate 1,600 union longshoremen. Judge Sloss ruled that employers had no authority under last year's arbitration award to blacklist these men—THE EDITORS.

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make the blacklist possible employers took over the hiring of gangs in violation of the union agreement—and the central principle around which the general strike was fought.

The shipowners' next move was to ask longshore arbitrator Judge M. C. Sloss for a decision endorsing their stand on forcing the longshoremen to handle hot cargo, which Sloss immediately and obligingly handed down on September 27. Finally, to clinch matters, the shipowners brought in Assistant Secretary of Labor Edward McGrady from Washington. He commanded the longshoremen "as honorable men . . . to abide by the decision of Judge Sloss," and attacked their leaders who are fighting this concerted attempt to drive the longshoremen into organized scabbing.

Notice of the intensified union-smashing campaign slated for the West Coast was given the men on the waterfront when The Voice of Federation, official organ of the Maritime Federation, printed the news of a secret conference held in San Francisco the first week in September of the Waterfront Employers' Association with heads of the Industrial Association, the Chamber of Commerce and over 200 representatives of big business from San Francisco, Seattle and cities up and down the Pacific Coast. An Associated Press story of the meeting wired to Coast papers at 12:30 p. m. was followed at 12:45 p. m. by an urgent order to all A. P. clients to kill the item. The Voice of Federation, which obtained the story through confidential sources, was the only paper in the country to publish the story.

The secret conference emphasized the necessity of getting rid of Harry Bridges. Roger Lapham, head of the American-Hawaiian Steamship Company, declared:

> Bridges is stronger today than he was a year ago and unless his influence is eliminated we won't get anywhere.

Lapham also stated:

> The forces of union labor are increasing in power. This is particularly true along the Pacific waterfronts. Public support is necessary if this tendency is to be checked.

And A. H. Lundeen, president of the Seattle Chamber of Commerce, warned the conference with a frankness that explains the panicky haste to supppress the story of the conference sent out by the A. P. correspondent:

> Further progress of the maritime workers under their present leadership bodes disaster. . . . We are afraid we will be jockeyed into a position where other business will demand that we arbitrate. We must have the backing of every branch of business if we are to win this struggle. And if we do not win, union labor will move in and organize your workers as it has organized ours.

In line with the above, a "Vigilante Committee of 1,000" has been organized in the San Francisco area. The waterfront workers have answered by launching the "Committee of a Hundred Thousand" to which shore unions are rallying and which is also gaining the support of students and professionals. The shipowners' paper, The Shipping Register, recently printed an editorial entitled "Are All the Vigilantes Dead?", in which it says: "There are hundreds of thousands of red-blooded Americans here in San Francisco. What say we take off a day from our regular business and attend to the matter in a proper manner?"

A campaign is under way, backed of course by Hearst, for the adoption by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors of a so-called "Disaster Preparedness Ordinance." The ordinance provides for the coordination of the activities of police, National Guards, American Legion, etc., in time of "disaster," with an Emergency Council of twenty-two to run the works to which the mayor is required to invite seven ranking army, navy, coast guard, Red Cross, marine corps and national guard officers. For general consumption "disaster" is defined as an "act of God" such as fire, earthquake, etc. However, the original draft of the ordinance contained a clause defining disaster as including "widespread rioting and insurrection." The phrase was removed at the instance of the Samuel Gompers Post of the Legion.

C. A. Turner, official of the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company, revealed the true purpose of the ordinance, in the following statement:

> The General Strike of 1934 is responsible for the origin of the plan. . . . We have union men on the committee and there is no use in drawing any particular attention to that phase of our program at this time. The situation that faced us last year was a disaster from the standpoint of public welfare.

The Legion Convenes

SAMUEL LESLIE

THE Legion is coming. St. Louis rouses itself from its torpor. Wooden stands are erected on the Plaza. Hammers ring out from the new Municipal Auditorium which the Legion is to consecrate with its convention. For atmosphere and utility, little booths labeled "Men's Latrine . . . Poste de Secour" spring up on numerous streets. A tremendous show of patriotism blazes out: red, white and blue streamers everywhere, on telegraph poles, trolley wires, building facades. Everywhere signs: "Welcome Legionnaires . . . Hello Buddy . . ." In show windows, military displays—gas masks, grenades, guns, photos of the war. Little blue ship-shape legionnaire caps appear on the heads of ushers, waitressess, Chinese launderers. A great to-do. Behind the warmth of welcome there peers the cold, calculating eye of business intent on getting all it can out of the 150,000 persons expected to attend the convention.

The amusement of the legionnaires is a paramount undertaking. The film *Red Salute* is purposely having its world premiere in St. Louis and is dedicated to the Legion. Its advertising blurb reads, "She made him see 'Red' . . . But he made her see 'Red, White and Blue!' . . . She fell for a collegiate soapbox orator who cried 'down with everything!'—but a soldier boy taught her that love was more important than long-haired Lotharios from Leningrad!" Burlesque shows which have been moribund in St. Louis, suddenly revive: semi-nude platinum blondes arrive to tease the libido of the hundred percenters. A "Scarlet House of Paris—Men Only" appears. The lid is slowly being lifted on prostitution.

As the legionnaires arrive the newspapers are hard put dividing their attention between them and one perfectly juicy story involving an unmarried mother, an illegal transfer of an illegitimate child, a society woman being tried for complicity in a kidnaping. But column by column, page by page, the legionnaires steal the show and dominate the scene. All highways are heavy with traffic. Special trains well-equipped with bars, steam in loaded to capacity. St. Louis becomes a city of uniforms. Men, women and children in variant blue and gold outfits fill the streets. (There is the women's auxiliary and the junior branches for kids of tender age and malleable minds who must be trained early to the standards of Legion Americanism.) By the time the Mayor of St. Louis gets around to the time-honored custom of giving the key of the city to National Commander Belgrano, stating "the city is yours," he is too late for the legionnaires have already appropriated it as their sporting ground.

A Forty and Eight locomotive, filled with legionnaires of that great "fun-making" branch of the Legion, clangs by and on it is chalked the funmaking slogan "All aboard for Ethiopia, to Hell with Peace."

Laughter and shouting and discordant singing emanates from saloons at all hours. Men and women stagger about calling "Where's Elmer?" Autos race down the streets, gongs clanging. Forty and Eight locomotive cars

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with trailer voitures cruise about endlessly, tirelessly. Troups with musical instruments halting heavy traffic. Legionnaires sit down in the middle of busy crossings and refuse to budge; or, pushing traffic cops aside, take over their places and produce heavy congestion and turmoil. Crap games on downtown sidewalks. Young women playfully attacked, undressed. Huge fires started on busy streets. The fire department called out—they particularly delight in seeing the engines go by. However, this fun becomes a bit tenuous after a while and the Mayor makes a weak plea to please let up a trifle. But Governor Merriam of California, who is present when the plea is made, says: "There's nothing so thrilling as watching the firemen charging down the street pell-mell through the crowds, and the spirit is entirely innocent since there is no fire anyhow." But Governor Merriam's only serious concern is Communism and, after all, calling out the fire department is "innocent" in comparison with being a striking longshoreman or a "Red."

For the second of the four convention days no sessions, but an all-day parade, is scheduled. A holiday is proclaimed by the Governor of Missouri. The Legion appears in all its military splendor. Legionnaires in snappy uniforms, bemedaled, belted, helmeted, plumed, stride down the streets in step to martial tunes, colors flying, saluting. What a penchant they have for saluting! Flags blow in the breeze, drums beat time. It is a gala affair. The populace is being shown the splendors of a uniform, that there is something about a soldier. Seen as a whole, the jamboree could well be considered a dress rehearsal to see how completely the legionnaires can take over the streets of a city.

At the convention hall attendance is poor. Vacant seats everywhere: in the section reserved for the 1,207 delegates as well as in the galleries for the general membership. Seldom are there more than one fourth of the official delegates present. But absences do not seem to phase anyone. Only when the bonus is ready to come up for discussion does Commander Belgrano adjourn the meeting to the next day because here is something concrete and definite that is going to be acted on favorably and it is desirable to have as many legionnaires as possible present so that they can actually see what the Legion is doing for them.

It is of interest to note the composition of the Legion as shown at the convention. The officers on the stage and those among the delegates' section appear well-to-do. There are paunchy fellows with well-groomed appearances and the look that betokens the genteel existence. They represent wealth or the tools of wealth. Among them is a galaxy of notables, governors, mayors, senators, congressmen, heads of corporations—figures who dazzle the membership with their positions in life. But the membership is, for the most part, preponderantly bourgeois — stolid-looking citizens, well fed, well dressed, who have nice cars, who have not in the real sense felt the economic pinch. There are proletarian elements too, shoddy in their appearance, whose hands show the marks of toil, whose faces show the traces of the not so comfortable existence. But it is noteworthy that scarcely any are to be seen who are entirely dilapidated in appearance, who give signs of being down and out, who have come to the convention via the freights or hitchhiking. Certainly there must be such an element in the American Legion. That they do not come to the convention in numbers betokens the fact that they do not expect anything of any real advantage to themselves to come of it. Finally, among the legionnaires there are some few Negroes. But they are entirely isolated.

The convention opens with multiple ceremonies. A prayer by the national chaplain, the singing of the "Star Spangled Banner," the saluting of the colors, the legionnaires at attention. Honor is done to Mme. Schumann-Heink who led the singing and who has been adopted as a sort of official mascot by the Legion. She responds with gushy sentimentalities. Well does she symbolize the Legion with her meaningless chatter and show of senescent decay. I cannot help but contrast her with another famous old woman, 73 years of age, white haired, sprightly, alert, a veteran and meaningful symbol of the American labor movement. Mother Bloor, now serving sentence in a Nebraska jail for leading a picket line, was also in St. Louis recently, also addressed a large gathering, but of workers and with devotional fire and enthusiasm, inspiring everyone to real fervor.

For the greater part of two days the convention is taken up with governors and mayors raising their voices in flowery eloquence, trying to induce the legionnaires to convene the following years in their fair cities. Statesman after statesman comes up to the microphone, avows himself a "buddy" ("I'm just private Barney" . . . "I don't know why I'm up here, I should be down there with the rest of you camerades"), a supporter of the program against Communism; and each in turn barks the virtues of his state, offering the usual $50,000 for the Legion to convene there.

ONE can hardly blame the audience for paying scant attention to speakers. It is the same taradiddle over and over again. Platitudes, abstractions, phrases about patriotism, Americanism, the Constitution, God and country, the national defense, keeping the faith. Repeated and ever more fiery talk on subversive elements, Russian Communism, "the human rats who are gnawing at the very foundations of our country, in industry, on the docks, in the camps, aboard ship, in the schools, the pulpit or the government." But on things concrete—nothing. Thus, on the problem of wide-spread unemployment only this sagacious remark by Persons, the director of the U. S. Employment Service: "This year we have become more convinced than ever before that the veteran is a highly-employable man." On the problem of youth, naive remarks to the effect that every child has the right to a good moral, physical and religious American life, the right to proper parenthood, the right to a good education, to a good job, to freedom from radical influences! But nothing concrete proposed on how to guarantee them these rights, except the right of freedom from radical influences! On the imminent problem of war, proclamations that we must increase our militarization, strengthen our national defense, build the R.O.T.C., military training in the C.C.C.—definitely militaristic, rather than the peace program it is supposed to be. On the Florida veterans' disaster, only a perfunctory and incomplete measure to investigate—a mere gesture.

For the activities of the coming year the convention dedicates the Legion chiefly to the program of "Americanism . . . to fight against isms contrary to the principles of democracy." It assails Communism, adopting measures to urge the cancelation of American recognition of Soviet Russia (cheers from the audience). It adopts the resolution that destitute aliens and all aliens belonging to any group advocating the overthrow of the government by violence be deported and that all aliens be fingerprinted. Thus, with conditions of labor getting worse, the Legion is forging weapons against next year's inevitable growth of the labor movement. And the top leadership of the American Federation of Labor, alarmed by the indications that the rank and file are rising against its perfidy, seeks to strike up an unholy alliance with the American Legion. George L. Berry, representing the A.F. of L., speaks before the convention: "I hope that the American Legion and the American Federation of Labor will rededicate themselves to the end that we may separate the goats from the sheep in this country. . . . There is a community of interests between these two great American institutions." The Legion also prepares to fight the militant student movement which is growing so rapidly. Resolutions are adopted condemning the use of public schools for student anti-war strikes or meetings and recommending the adequate teaching "of the story of America and its ideals and principles in American schools and colleges."

When the bonus matter comes up—the only matter of any real importance to the vast majority of the legionnaires—they express themselves with a vehemence that is far from their passive acceptance of the Americanism program. With a tremendous show of violent feeling they hiss and boo Congressman Wright Patman off the stage because he has thwarted them in confounding the issue of the payment of the bonus with inflation. They would probably hiss President Roosevelt himself for vetoing the bonus bill had he not knowingly canceled his engagement to appear before the convention. They want their bonus and that is all there is to it.

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Imitation of an Anti-Crime Drive

SASHA SMALL

ALBANY, N. Y.

AT THE head of one of the many pages of carefully mimeographed material recording all the mountains and mountains of talk about crime and criminals that filled the halls of the State Capitol chambers during Governor Lehman's conference on "Crime, the Criminal and Society," there is a typographical error which characterizes the whole business very neatly. The unfortunate sentence refers to a discussion which was "in conformity with the purposes of the conference as stated by the Governor at the opening session last night, the *imitation* of an active campaign against crime."

Four whole days were consumed in this active imitation. Everybody who is anybody in the "crime" world was there. Even the criminals were there and enlarged photos proudly displayed what was left of their corpses after the G-men got through with them.

Wardens, chief guards, district attorneys, commissioners of correction, judges and ex-judges, professors and social workers, lobbyists and just plain politicians sat around in the comfortable furniture provided for New York state legislators, smoked innumerable, expensive cigars, burnt holes in the elegant rugs in putting them out and discoursed upon crime and criminals. The actual organization of the conference consisted of four general assemblies held in the evening and five Round Table conferences, conducted during the day. The topics discussed at the round tables fell under the following headings: Crime Prevention, Detection and Apprehension, Prosecution and the Courts, Institutional Care and Probation, Parole and Rehabilitation. Long high-sounding words, that were bandied around and repeated until they re-echoed through the corridors. Fancy ways of describing miserable reformatories and cruel children's courts, hounding and third-degree methods, railroading and frame-up, long sentences in hellish jails, corruption-ridden follow-up work and the non-existent "reform." I spent most of the time at the Round Table on *"Institutional Care."* The gentlemen and ladies participating in this discussion were people who at present administer this "institutional care"—wardens, matrons, guards, a sprinkling of psychiatrists and doctors, a few professors.

There is no need to repeat most of the high-flown hypocrisy that wasted four valuable days. The wardens hastened to reassure each other and the prison commissioners and the press that all this talk about "coddling" men in their jails was ridiculous. Even liberal Warden Lawes rose to the occasion, glowing at all about him and smilingly admitted that "punishment" was not lacking at Sing Sing, that every inmate was made to feel that the state was punishing him and under no circumstances was he ever told that society had been bad to him. He is made to feel the full responsibility of his crime. After that he expanded on the merits of football for prisoners and laughingly admitted that he never had to put armed guards on his walls to keep men out.

Educational projects, classification, psychiatric reports are the fashion of the day and all the best prisons in New York state tolerate them — but there was well-rounded applause at Tuesday evening's general session when Nathan L. Miller, ex-governor of New York, boomed forth that punishment (imprisonment at hard labor) must continue to be the chief deterrent and warning to others, that while he did not suggest third-degree methods, the police ought not to be hampered in their dealing with the enemies of society and "in the matter of judgment, undue severity undoubtedly reacts, but I think that it is better to err on the side of severity if at all."

With the exception of Commissioner Austin MacCormick of New York who pleaded for understanding of the fundamental principle that neither crime nor criminal can exist without a social order to define them, that the criminal is a product of social forces — all the other worthy participants were most eager to whitewash themselves in the eyes of those who criticized them as incompetent, soft-hearted.

The real criminals have little to fear from the governor's conference. The establishment of state G-men, compulsory fingerprinting of all citizens, compulsory police training of citizens, deportation of foreign born, stricter parole — will all be used most effectively against militant workers, friends and the "small criminals" who break into grocery stores to get bread for their kids.

Two startling moments of the conference which will not see the light of day except on these pages were of really far-reaching significance. The Honorable Sanford Bates, Director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons for the United States Department of Justice, gave a report on the International Prison Congress recently completed in Berlin. He reported that there was a congress, that it was held in Berlin, that there were 1,000 delegates, of whom 600 were Nazis, that Goebbels and other Nazi leaders addressed the congress, that resolutions were passed — and then he sat down. Even the jailers were shocked. For a moment there was complete silence. Everyone had read the papers on what transpired at that congress, how the Nazis had harangued the delegates on the virtue of replacing all concepts of law, imprisonment, justice with the tenets of the National Socialist Party. The congress opened right after the intensified wave of pogroms against the Jewish people, the Catholics, the Protestants. The international delegates, infuriated at the Nazi farce, had insisted on seeing Ernst Thaelmann and finally were permitted to watch him taking his daily walk. Even the fattest of the wardens had heard about German concentration camps, the People's Courts, the summary executions, the tortures in the dungeons of the Gestapo. But Mr. Bates had nothing to say on all this.

Some one ventured a question—were the German jails any better under the Nazi regime? While he was speaking Bates openly waved him to silence. Another American delegate, James V. Bennett, Bates' assistant, rose and said, "I saw——" Bates called him to the front of the room, whispered in his ear and he proceeded to hem and haw about the cleanliness of Germany's jails, the good food the prisoners were getting, the fine solitary confinement arrangements. Then he sat down.

Finally an elderly lady from the Children's Court got up and indignantly asked what about concentration camps and the treatment of the political prisoners. Bates looked at Bennett. Bennett looked at Bates and smirked: "We didn't see any."

Bates then rose and explained that he would give no opinion because of what newspaper headlines try to do with "chance statements," but he would say that there was a lot "we" could learn from Germany's methods and jails.

Immediately after this thunderbolt Dr. Walter N. Thayer, Junior Commissioner of Correction of the State of New York, got up and said, "Speaking of political prisoners — there is an organization in this country which keeps sending me and most of you a lot of letters about political prisoners who are supposed to be in our jails." With a beatific smile he announced that of course there were no political prisoners in this country and with a properly dramatic frown he went on to say that these letters with their *"dee-mands"* for rights for these prisoners — literature, letters, visits, discussion groups — were ridiculous. What is more, this organization presumed to tell "us how to run our prisons. Ladies and gentlemen, these ridiculous letters can be ignored. These organizations that are promoting this sort of thing can rest assured that we haven't and won't alter our prison management to meet any these *dee-mands.*"

He didn't mention the name of the organization, but the exchanged glances among several of the wardens showed clearly they all recognized the International Labor Defense and it may interest these gentlemen to know that this same organization is holding a conference on October 15 to plan a vigorous campaign, for the recognition of the status of almost one hundred long-term political prisoners in this country. A vital part of this campaign will be demands for special privileges for those who gave their freedom in loyalty to the working class.

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Lynd Ward in *One of Us: The Story of John Reed*

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America 1918

JOHN REED

This unpublished poem by John Reed was apparently begun in Russia in January, 1918. Reed worked on it during February and March, when he was detained in Christiania on the orders of the United States government. After his return to this country, he was too much occupied with lecturing on the Russian revolution, writing Ten Days That Shook the World *and organizing the Left wing of the Socialist Party and subsequently the Communist Labor Party, to revise the poem. The two stanzas in italics and the preceding stanza appeared in Poetry for April, 1919, under the title "Proud New York." Otherwise the poem remained unpublished. The manuscript was in the large collection of letters and documents turned over to the Harvard John Reed Memorial Committee by Louise Bryant and now being used by Granville Hicks in the biography of Reed which he is preparing. The significance of the poem in its relation to John Reed's work as poet and as a revolutionary is discussed in an editorial in this issue.*

THE EDITORS.

Across the sea my country, my America,
Girt with steel, hard-glittering with power,
As a champion, with great voice trumpeting
High words, "For Liberty . . . Democracy . . ."

Deep within me something stirs, answers—
(My country, my America!)
As if alone in the high and empty night
She called me—my lost one, my first lover
I love no more, love no more, love no more . . .
The cloudy shadow of old tenderness,
Illusions of beautiful madness—many deaths
And easy immortality . . .

I

By my free boyhood in the wide West
The powerful sweet river, fish-wheels, log-rafts,
Ships from behind the sunset, Lascar-manned,
Chinatown, throbbing with mysterious gongs,
The blue thunderous Pacific, blaring sunsets,
Black smoking forests on surf-beaten headlands,
Lost beaches, camp-fires, wail of hunting cougars . . .
By the rolling range, and the flat sun-smitten desert,
Night with coyotes yapping, domed with burst of stars,
The grey herd moving eastward, towering dust,
Ropes whistling in slow coils, hats flapping, yells . . .
By miles of yellow wheat ripping in the Chinook,
Orchards forever endless, deep in blooming,
Green-golden orange-groves and snow-peaks looming over . . .
By raw audacious cities sprung from nothing,
Brawling and bragging in their careless youth . . .
I know thee, America!

Fishermen putting out from Astoria in the foggy dawn their double-bowed boats,
Lean cow-punchers jogging south from Burns, with faces burned leathery and silent,
Stringy old prospectors trudging behind reluctant pack-horses, across the Nevada alkali,
Hunters coming out of the brush at night-fall on the brink of the Lewis and Clark canyon,
Grunting as they slide off their fifty-pound packs and look around for a place to make camp,
Forest rangers standing on a bald peak and sweeping the wilderness for smoke,
Big-gloved brakemen walking the top of a swaying freight, spanner in hand, biting off a hunk of plug,
Lumbermen with spiked boots and timber-hook, riding the broken jam in white water,
Indians on the street-corner in Pocatello, pulling out chin-whiskers with a pair of tweezers and a pocket-mirror,
Or down on the Siuslaw, squatting behind their summer lodges listening to Caruso on a two-hundred-dollar phonograph,
Loud-roaring Alaska miners, smashing looking-glasses, throwing the waiter a five-dollar gold-piece for a shot of whiskey and telling him to keep the change,
Keepers of dance-halls in construction-camps, bar-keeps, prostitutes,
Bums riding the rods, wobblies singing their defiant songs, unafraid of death,
Card-sharps and real-estate agents, timber-kings, wheat-kings, cattle-kings . . .
I know ye, Americans!

2

By my bright youth in golden Eastern towns . . .
Harvard . . . pain of growing, ecstasy of unfolding,
Thrill of books, thrill of friendship, hero-worship,
Intoxication of dancing, tempest of great music,
Squandering delight, first consciousness of power . . .
Wild nights in Boston, battles with policemen,
Picking up girls, nights of lurid adventure . . .
Winter swims at L street, breaking the ice
Just for the strong shock on a hard body . . .
And the huge Stadium heaving up its thousands
With cadenced roaring cheer or song tremendous
When Harvard scored on Yale . . . By this, by this
I know thee, America!

By proud New York and its man-piled Matterhorns,
The hard blue sky overhead and the west wind blowing,
Steam-plumes waving from sun-glittering pinnacles,
And deep streets shaking to the million-river—

Manhattan, zoned with ships, the cruel
Youngest of all the world's great towns,
Thy bodice bright with many a jewel,
Imperially crowned with crowns . . .

Who that hath known thee but shall burn
In exile till he come again
To do thy bitter will, O stern
Moon of the tides of men!

Soaring Fifth Avenue, Peacock Street, Street of banners,
Ever-changing pageant of splendid courtesans,
Fantastic color, sheen of silks and silver, toy-dogs,
Procession of automobiles like jewel-boxes—

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Traffic-cop majestical with lifted yellow hand—
Palaces, hotels gigantic, old men in club-windows,
Sweat-shops belching their dun armies at noon-time,
Parades, mile-waves of uniforms flowing up
Bands crashing, between the black still masses of people . . .

Broadway, gashing the city like a lava-stream,
Crowned with shower of sparks, as a beaten fire,
Blazing theaters, brazen restaurants, smell of talc,
Movie mansions, hock-shops, imitation diamonds,
Chorus-girls making the rounds of the booking-agencies,
Music-factories blatting from twenty-five pianos,
And all the hectic world of paint and shirt-front . . .

Old Greenwich Village, citadel of amateurs,
Battle-ground of all adolescent Utopias,
Half sham-Bohemia, dear to uptown slummers,
Half sanctuary of the outcast and dissatisfied . . .
Free fellowship of painters, sailors, poets,
Light women, Uranians, tramps and strike-leaders,
Actresses, models, people with aliases or nameless,
Sculptors who run elevators for a living,
Musicians who have to pound pianos in picture-houses. . .
Working, dissipating, most of them young, most of them poor,

Lynd Ward.

Playing at art, playing at love, playing at rebellion,
In the enchanted borders of the impossible republic . . .

Mysteriously has word of it gone forth
To lonely cabins in the Virginia mountains,
Logging-camps in the Maine woods, desert ranches,
Farms lost in vastnesses of Dakota wheat . . .
Wherever young heart-hungry dreamers of splendor
Can find in all the hard immensity of America
No place to fashion beauty, no companion
To shameless talk of loveliness and love,
Here would they be, elbow on a wooden table at Polly's,
Or, borrowing a fiver, over Burgundy at the Brevoort,
Arguing about Life, and Sex, and the Revolution . . .

The East Side, *worlds within a world, chaos of* nations,
Sink of the nomad races, last and wretchedest
Port of the westward Odyssey of mankind . . .
At dawn vomiting colossal flood of machine-fodder,
At evening sucking back with terrible harsh sound
To *beast-like tenements, garish nickelodeons, gin-mills*. . .
Kids hanging round the corner saloon, inhaling cheap cigarettes,
Leering at the short-skirted girls who two by two go giggling by,
Picking their way between crawling babies, over the *filthy sidewalk* . . .
Children at shrill daring games under the hoofs of truck-horses —
Gaunt women screaming at them and each other, in twanging foreign tongues—
Old men sitting on the crowded stoop in shirt-sleeves, *smoking an evening pipe,*
Glare of push-cart torches ringed with alien faces . . .

In dim Rumanian wine-cellars I am not unwelcome,
Pulsing with hot rhythm of scornful gypsy fiddlers . . .
In Grand Street coffee-rooms, haunt of Yiddish philosophers,
Novelists reading aloud a new chapter, collecting a dime from each auditor,
Playwrights dramatizing the newspaper headlines, poets dumb to deaf America . . .
Fenian saloons, with prominent green flag, and a framed bond of the Irish Republic over the bar,
Italian *ristorantes,* Chianti and spontaneous tenors,
Armenian kitchens hung with Oriental carpets from New Jersey,
Where hawk-faced men whisper over thick coffee, fingering *tesbiehs* . . .
German *bier-stuben,* painted with fat mottoes . . .
French cafes, neat madame at the *caisse,*
Greek *kaffeinias,* chop-suey joints with contemptuous slant-eyed waiters . . .

Theatres, Italian marionettes gesticulating Tasso,
Flabby burlesque at Miner's . . . Tomashevsky's Jewish coryphees,
Offenbach in Irving Place, winey snap and sparkle,
La Scala Opera Company in *Otello* at the Verdi—
Ragged costumes, toppling scenery, and voices glorious. . .
And the Sicilian Duse, glowing through Giovanitti's *Tenebri Rossi*
Like a volcanic daybreak over the Siberian tundra . . .

Well do I know the Russian brass-shops on Allen street,
The opium-stinking dens of the Cantonese lottery-men,
And where the Syrians sell their cool grey water-jars . . .

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Chatham Square, framed in monstrous kinema-signs and the saloons of the damned,
Bowery old-clothes men, stale sand-floored drinking-rooms, spotted with old spittle,
Beaf-steak John's, spoken of by sailors in the uttermost ports of earth,
Peter Cooper Square in the sick light of before-dawn
Heaped up with hol eless men . . . the ten-cent lodging-houses
Where shaking wrecks sit dully picking lice around the red-hot stove . . .
Stuss-games in sinister back-rooms over on Avenue A,
Dingy law-offices in the shadow of the Tombs, shrines of unclean miracles,
The blasted twilight under the hysterical thunder of the East River bridges,
And South Street fragrant still with spices of long-vanished clipper-ships . . .

Dear and familiar and unforgettable is the city
As the face of my mother . . .

City Hall, never-still whirlpool of the seven millions,
Drowned in the crashing ebb and flow of Brooklyn Bridge,
Human cascades from the Elevated, and the Subway geysers spouting . . .
Tall humming newspaper-offices aglitter till the dawn,
Flocks of little newsboys like dusty sparrows
Splashing in the forbidden fountains . . . sleeping bums . . .
In the far-flung shadow of legendary towers . . .
The Battery, sea-wind-cool, at the foot of the sky-scraper precipice,
And the sonorous great ships going by, bound for the ends of sea,
Squat hurtling ferries, barges stiff with box-cars, eagle-crested tugs,
Yellow spray leaping the sea-wall, hoarse gulls circling over,
And Liberty lifting gigantic, menacing, out of the strife of keels,
Behind it crouching Ellis Island, purgatory of freedom . . .

Exotic Negro-town, upper Amsterdam Avenue,
And its black sensuous easily-happy people, shunned of men,
The Dark-town Follies, and Europe's ragtime orchestra . . .
Central Park, elegant motors purring along the drive,
Smart cavaliers, perambulators of the upper-classes,
Lovers on benches uneasily spooning, one eye out for the cops
And the gasping slums poured out hot summer nights to sleep on the meadows . . .
Harlem, New York second-hand and slightly cheaper,
Bronx, post-graduate ghetto, scabby growth of new tenements,
Vast green-glowing parks, and the frayed edge of the country . . .

Have I omitted you, truck-quaking West Street, dingy Death Avenue,
Gracious old Church of the Sea and Land, Inwood, tip of Manhattan,
The rag-shops of Minetta Lane, and the yelping swirl of the Broad Street Curb,
Macdougal Alley, gilded squalor of fashionable artists,
Coenties Slip, old sea-remembering notch at the back of down-town—?

Lynd Ward.

Nay, across the world, three thousand miles away, without map or guide-book,
Ask me and I will describe them, and their people,
In all weathers, drunk or sober, by sun and moon . . .

I have watched the summer day come up from the top of a pier of the Williamsburgh Bridge,
I have slept in a basket of squid at the Fulton Street Market,
Talked about God with the old cockney woman who sells hot-dogs under the Elevated at South Ferry,
Listen to tales of dago dips in the family parlor of the Hell-hole,
And from the top gallery of the Metropolitan heard Didur sing "Boris Godounov" . . .
I have shot craps with gangsters in the Gas House district,
And seen what happens to a green bull on San Juan Hill . . .
I can tell you where to hire a gunman to croak a squealer,
And where young girls are bought and sold, and how to get coke on 125th Street
And what men talk about behind Steve Brodie's, or in the private rooms of the Lafayette Baths . . .

Dear and familiar and ever-new to me is the city
As the body of my lover . . .

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All sounds—harsh clatter of the Elevated, rumble of the subway,
Tapping of policemen's clubs on midnight pavements,
Hand-organs plaintive and monotonous, squawking motor-horns,
Gatling crepitation of airy riveters,
Muffled detonations deep down underground,
Flat bawling of newsboys, quick-clamoring ambulance gongs,
Deep nervous tooting from the evening harbor,
And the profound shuffling thunder of myriad feet . . .

All smells—smell of sample shoes, second-hand clothing,
Dutch bakeries, Sunday delicatessen, kosher cooking,
Smell of damp tons of newspapers along Park Row,
The Subway, smelling like the tomb of Rameses the Great,
The tired odor of infinite human dust-drug-stores,
And the sour slum stench of mean streets . . .

People—rock-eyed brokers gambling with Empires,
Swarthy insolent boot-blacks, cringing push-cart peddlers,
The white-capped wop flipping wheat-cakes in the window of Childs',
Sallow garment-workers coughing on a park-bench in the thin spring sun,
Dully watching the leaping fountain as they eat a handful of peanuts for lunch . . .

The steeple-jack swaying infinitesimal at the top of the Woolworth flag-pole,
Charity workers driving hard bargains for the degradation of the poor,
Worn-out snarling street-car conductors, sentimental prize-fighters,
White wings scouring the roaring traffic-ways, foul-mouthed truck-drivers,
Spanish longshoremen heaving up freight-mountains, hollow-eyed silk workers,
Structural steel workers catching hot rivets on high-up spidery girders,
Sand-hogs in hissing air-locks under the North River, sweating subway muckers, hard-rock men blasting beneath Broadway,
Ward-leaders with uptilted cigars, planning mysterious underground battles for power,
Raucous soap-boxers in Union Square, preaching the everlasting crusade,
Pale half-fed cash-girls in department stores, gaunt children making paper-flowers in dim garrets,
Princess stenographers, and manicurists chewing gum with a queenly air,
Macs, whore-house madams, street-walkers, touts, bouncers, stool-pigeons . . .
All professions, races, temperaments, philosophies,
All history, all possibilities, all romance,
America . . . the world . . . !

Enduring Bronze

HEYWOOD BROUN

"NO MORE for me," said Bill Standish.

"Just one," urged Tom Watson. "You don't know, but it's an anniversary and we haven't drunk to it yet."

"You can't ring your birthday in on me," insisted Standish. "That was last month and my wife's just begun to speak to me again."

"You have no recollection of what happened one year ago tonight?"

"I suppose the French cabinet fell or they assassinated the King of Bulgaria."

"They shot more than that, Bill. Just one year ago tonight The Chicago Star folded up and died. And we all came around here and got plastered and made speeches and sang songs. You made five or six speeches. You had us all weeping. Don't you remember? You said The Star wasn't really dead and that it would live in the hearts of all the men who had ever worked on it. That was along about the time you told us that we might have sold our bodies to James K. Benham but that our souls belonged to God. Then there was that part about a paper wasn't an owner or an A.P. franchise or a lot of machinery down in the cellar. You've probably forgotten but I can quote you exactly—'A paper's a staff and we were and we are the liver and lights of that paper.' And you urged us to meet every year at this same place and drink to the toast 'Here's to a new Star to be run bravely and honestly and without Benham.' Then you socked your glass against the mirror and we all did the same and Louis turned out the lights and sent us home. Don't you remember?"

"It comes back to me vaguely," admitted Standish. "I was always puzzled about that bill I got from Louis. It merely said 'Wear and tear—$8.25.' I thought he meant the speeches. Naturally I never paid it and Louis didn't persist. He probably figured I was worth more on the hoof than in the hoosegow."

"Here he comes now," said Watson. "Don't you think you ought to let him take some of it out in trade? After all, this is the anniversary you founded."

Without waiting for a reply Watson called across the room to the proprietor, "Two double brandies, Louis. No, I guess you better make it a bottle."

"Bravely and honestly and without Benham!" mused Standish. "I must have been quite plastered. But just the same it would be swell."

An hour later the two survivors had reached the stage of swapping do-you-remember-when stories. "And Sam was all the way down to 'Caesar, Julius—multiple contusions and possible internal injuries' before Whitey got wise that he was being kidded."

"Sam Wilson was the best fellow and the best newspaper man I ever knew," said Standish. "Did you ever know him?"

Tom Watson seemed a little shaken. "I don't like to talk about it," he answered. "I never worked with him on The Star but fifteen years ago we were pals in Columbus. I didn't see him again until it happened. You know the crash was only a couple of miles outside of Columbus. I was the first newspaper man to get there but Sam was dead. Talk about something else."

"This was before your time," Standish explained, "but you've seen those notices Benham used to put on the bulletin board about how the staff of The Star was all one big happy family. Well, up to about five years ago—the year Sam Wilson died—he used to give a picnic out at his place in the country every Fourth of July, but this particular Fourth he was sick all of a sudden and he had to take to his bed. The cheese sandwiches were all ordered anyway and so his secretary said for us to come out. We had a group photograph snapped on the lawn and we signed our names and sent it up to the old man to cheer him up. He took one look and said, 'My God, do I employ as many people as that? I don't need 'em. Everybody in the back line is fired.' By the way what's moved in after us? Don't tell me Benham's letting that empty space eat its head off."

"I don't think the city room's been rented," answered Watson. "I was going by the building a couple of weeks ago and I stopped up just for old times' sake. It gave me the creeps.

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Of course, everything's been moved out—just the bare walls and six inches of dust on the floor. And it was so quiet that you could have heard a district man asking J. K. Benham for a raise. I just stuck my nose in and ran for my life. I was afraid that the old man's voice might boom out in that vacuum and shatter all the windows."

"What do you say," suggested Standish, "let's go over and take a look. We might poke around and stir up some of the ghosts. I still say The Star isn't dead. Its soul goes marching on."

"At two o'clock in the morning?"

"They've still got all-night elevator service I hope, and if Tony's on the late trick he can get us a pass key and let us in. But first let's finish the bottle. You're not doing your share."

It was after three when they reached the Benham Building and Tony was less than hospitable.

"You don't understand," Standish insisted. "Tom and I are going to start a newspaper to be called The Chicago Star and we understand that you have some floor space suitable for a city room. Mr. Watson's drunk or he'd support me. If you don't believe me here's two dollars on account."

Tony took the two dollars but after he had sequestered it he suddenly remembered that there were no longer any light bulbs in the old city room of The Star.

"You insult me," protested Standish, "and you're almost insulting my friend. I know every foot of the place. Wasn't I for ten long years the best sports writer on the paper? And anyhow, if I wasn't I've got matches."

When they reached the tenth floor Tony said, "I wait here for you in the car unless I get ring. You don't need no key. We don't keep it locked. I told you there's nothing there. It's empty. What the hell do you want to see?"

"Ghosts, Tony," said Standish. "The snows of yesteryear, the tomb of my aspirations, the novel I never wrote, the play I didn't quite get around to. I swapped them all for the romance and glamor of the newspaper business. Surely Mr. Benham, or somebody in the business office, must have told you about the romance and glamor of the newspaper business when you asked for a raise, Tony!

"The Star has been dead a year and everybody has forgotten it but me and Tom. And at the moment he seems to have forgotten it. All the rest have fled. Their bones are bleaching in advertising agencies and on copy desks in Akron and Toledo. Stand aside, Tony. What ho! Sam Wilson—Wherever you are, come back and join us tonight in this graveyard of 'the people's paper.'"

"Next week it is occupied," said Tony.

"Who comes to profane this hallowed ground where once I wrote the lead 'The Ruth is mighty and shall prevail,'?" shouted Standish.

"'Kane and Whitehead' ready-to-wear suits for me," answered Tony.

"Then all the more reason for you to stand aside while my friend and I—don't you know me Tom—make this last pilgrimage to a deserted shrine soon to be desecrated by double-breasted blue serge. 'Ay, tear her tattered ensign down.' Stop the presses! Standish is back with a story."

"I wait in the car," said Tony.

Bill Standish gave Tom one arm of assistance down the long corridor where the lockers once stood. In his other hand he held a match.

"Wake up, Tom. Snap into it. This would be the very spot where once stood the desk of old Tom Watson. A hundred years from now they'll drive these college-cut clothiers out of the temple and mark this little acre with some suitable inscription. It was at this desk you rewrote a country correspondent's tornado story and you said, 'And suddenly the wind screamed as if some one had drawn a knife across the whole throat of the sky.' Does this room arouse no memories in you? Must I quote your own stuff back at you?"

Tom Watson straightened up and sobered slightly but it was less the words of his companion than the fact that Standish in lighting another cigarette had dropped the hot embers of the last upon his hand.

"Let's get out of here," he said thickly. "I don't like it."

"Oh, no, we are the faithful and this is our haystack in which we look for the glamor and romance of the newspaper business. Besides you've forgotten that I issued an invitation to Sam Wilson to meet us here."

"Sam was my pal. Don't joke about him. I don't like it," Watson muttered.

"He was my pal, too, and I'm not joking."

Watson shook his head as if trying to clear it. "You weren't there," he said. "Let's get out. I don't like it. Take me home. I'm drunk."

"But I tell you," insisted Standish argumentatively, "there's something of Sam in this room. There's something of all of us. Our souls are here. Why wouldn't they be? This is where we bartered them."

Tom Watson straightened up again. "That is a lie," he said. "Sam didn't sell his soul. He gave it away. He gave it for the paper. Get me out, I tell you. I don't like it. I'm drunk." He slumped against Standish and his elbow knocked the match to the floor where it glowed for a second and went out. Standish spoke in the darkness. "You're right, Tom. Sam gave his life for The Star and now The Star's dead. Where would he come but here?"

The silence of the bare room swept over them in waves as if it were a pale green gas. It was a strangely silent room to both since they had always thought of it as a place of clatter in which the keys of machines nipped at the heels of departing kings and captains. A prince is dead in Turkestan. Reds riot in the Loop. John Barrymore will remarry. "What wouldn't I give," thought Standish, "just to hear Red Duggan over in the corner learning to typewrite with two fingers." That would be in the corner to his right. He could tell that because at the far end of the room a little moonlight filtered through the north window where once had stood the desk of the city editor.

Aloud he said, but only in a whisper, "Sam, it's me, Bill Standish of The Star, and Tom Watson. Are you here? Give us a sign. Let's see you once again."

From close beside him came a scream so horrible that now he knew what Tom had meant when he wrote, "A knife drawn across the whole throat of the sky." And suddenly the slack weight against his shoulder became animate and Watson cried, "No! No! You didn't see him when they carried him from the plane. I want to get out."

He ran lurching across the room and in the wrong direction straight toward the dead end where the moonlight filtered through the north window. He had almost reached the wall when suddenly he stopped and moaned in terror, "Lights! Lights! For God's sake, lights. I saw his face."

Standish was beside him in a bound and set the entire cardboard packet to blazing. The dancing flame revealed the plaque imbedded in the wall just behind the spot where the city desk had stood when The Star still lived. "It's all right, Tom," said Standish soothingly. "It's the memorial. I'd forgotten all about it. You never could see it very well behind that desk." And as the flame died down he read, "Though mortally injured he told the stretcher bearers that first of all he must be taken to a telephone to let The Star have the story of the airplane crash. So that the name and fame of Samuel Wilson shall live it is here set down in enduring bronze by James L. Benham."

"You're right, Tom, let's get out of here. I don't like it. Wait a second, I'll give you a hand."

"It's all right, now," said Watson, "I've been scared pretty nearly sober. Let's go."

"I wonder why they left it here in this deserted room?" said Standish.

"That's easy. It was the only part of The Star that Benham couldn't sell."

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Correspondence

"Creative Memory"

To The New Masses:

On reading the "deadly parallel" in your correspondence columns of the October 8th issue, one is inclined immediately to dismiss the matter of Mr. Greenberg's poem as a brazen piece of plagiarism. It is truly no coincidence; the connection between it and Miss Welch's poem that had appeared earlier in The New Republic is too obvious. On second thought, however, several very unusual factors in this case strongly suggest the possibility of "unconscious borrowing" (no metaphysical implications intended). None of the usual incentives to plagiarism is discernible here. The money motive must be ruled out. The possibility of a practical joke is also ruled out by the pathetic tenor of Mr. Greenberg's "explanatory" letter. All other motives would necessarily involve the factor of attempted concealment to make detection difficult or impossible (coloration of the original, pilfering from remote sources in time, space or language, etc.). We find none of these factors here. No attempt to color the original seems to have been made. The original poem appeared a comparatively short time ago in a periodical so closely connected with the stream of New Masses readers that detection was a dead certainty. Add to this the fact that Mr. Greenberg (as he testifies) first submitted his poem to the very magazine in which the original had appeared and the whole incident becomes inexplicable from the viewpoint of conscious theft. Only an idiot would think it possible to get away with it; only a psychotic would be mad enough to face the opprobrium sure to follow detection. How then explain it? Not knowing Mr. Greenberg, I cannot answer for him, but I do offer the following as a possibility:

There are two types of borrowing in art and literature: conscious and unconscious. Many artists—including great ones—have consciously borrowed from others. In fact, time was when plagiarism was quite a respectable practice. The Elizabethan poets borrowed merrily from others and even from themselves. (Shakespeare, as is well known, never invented a plot.) But history is also replete with instances of unconscious borrowing chiefly attributable to the tricks that memory plays with all of us. Beethoven's "cribbing" of whole pages from Mozart and Haydn can be explained only on this basis, inasmuch as such a great genius could easily have camouflaged his theft were he conscious of it. (In musical improvization particularly this matter of unconscious borrowing is clearly evident: what seems to be spontaneous creation is often as not merely fragments of remembered bars skilfully and unconsciously pieced together.)

But could it be possible to copy an entire poem without being conscious of the source or connection? Yes. There are many curious mnemonic phenomena of this sort. The poet Coleridge had a remarkable memory. He could recite whole books almost word for word. In his poetic productions, he leaned often on his faculty for recollection, sometimes consciously, but often without being aware of his borrowing. (The relation of "Kubla Khan" to Milton's work is a case in point.) In all of us lies a vast storehouse of memory. A fleeting glimpse of a passing face, a striking scene (such as Mr. Greenberg describes as having furnished the "inspiration" for his poem), a sound or a smell may evoke a long chain of associated experiences—our own or those of others shared vicariously in books read or plays seen, etc. It often happens that the artist or writer reaches into this mnemonic reservoir when he sincerely believes he is dipping into the well of creation. All art, as Yeats says, is collaboration. The good artist is able to diffuse, refine and recreate his recollections and to make them peculiarly his own: the poor one must be content to copy.

But if the poem in question was remembered almost perfectly (we must assume, of course, that Mr. Greenberg *did* read the original), can *it* be possible to forget the circumstances? Students of psychology know that this, too, is perfectly possible.

All of which may be rationalization on my part. I hold no brief for plagiarists, but frankly, I hate to think that anyone even remotely connected with the movement could stoop to such a low level of petty literary larceny. I would rather believe that Mr. Greenberg is a poor but honest poet with a tricky memory.

New York City. Henry Cooper.

An Open Letter

To F. J. Schlink. M. G. Phillips and J. B. Matthews,
Consumers' Research,
Washington, New Jersey.

Dear Friends:

Really I don't know where to begin this letter. In all truthfulness, strange as it may seem, this is about the most distasteful job I have had to do in many a year.

I have been a subscriber to Consumers' Research for over a year; I have praised your publications to the high heavens; I have been instrumental, relatively speaking, in bringing you many new subscribers. In my library a complete list of your books, with the exception of Kallet's latest *Counterfeit* (which I intend purchasing soon), are my most valued and most borrowed volumes.

Frankly, my faith in Consumers' Research rested on the belief that it was grounded in Marxism and not based on liberalism or party-socialism. Never have I had reason to doubt this.

On my vacation you can imagine with what surprise I read of the strike at C.R. (Nation, New Masses, New Republic). I couldn't believe it. Imagining myself shock-proof to the nth degree, this information knocked me into profound despair. Still, I wanted to read your side of the case.

On returning home the Annual Handbook awaited me. Sometimes in the heat of anger one may say things he would afterwards regret. Sometimes it is all you can do to remain calm. Such a time is this. I will not go into your 4-page pamphlet on the strike, suffice it to say that it actually made me sick to my stomach! That last paragraph, particularly, is the acme of insulting hypocrisy. My God, Matthews, are you really such a Jekyl-Hyde personality that after penning *Partners in Plunder* (a book which I value most highly as the best popular presentation of capitalist exploitation) you could be a willing partner in having anything to do with such a statement? What base deceit! You Schlink, and you Miss Phillips (or Mrs. Schlink) are you deliberately trying to wreck the only non-profit consumers' service in America to further your own petty ambitions of dictatorship?

Three conclusions are open. (1) The above-mentioned rule-of-the-mighty—damn-all-else. (2) The last outpost of liberalism and revolutionary socialism has at last succumbed to the "Red scare." You, Schlink, Phillips, Matthews, do you think the Communists have affiliated with big business to break up the stage with their magazine New Theatre or have furthered "their own political purposes" by Health and Hygiene? Lord! Of course you don't. (3) A last conclusion is that you, Schlink, you, Phillips and you, Matthews have sold out to big business. A fantastic thought, but what is one to think? At any rate, by your actions and statements, you have certainly succeeded in undermining C.R.'s foundations. Is it not tragically humorous how the "Reds" are always accused of doing this very thing?

Canceling a Hearst subscription does a world of good. Hearst is a useless parasite and a dangerous man. Consumers' Research is one of the most vital institutions in the U. S. and should not be sabotaged. I will await developments. If you persist in your incredible stand, I will—though only one in 60,000—be compelled to cancel my subscription. I hope this does not have to happen. As it is, my faith in C.R.'s integrity is considerably shaken—probably it will never be fully regained.

Not in any spirit of animosity, but because I have C.R.'s interest at heart, I sincerely hope you will recognize the union, re-hire the discharged members, *reinstate* Arthur Kallet and Dewey H. Palmer on the board of directors and—this is important—make a public apology of the whole matter. Show us your mettle and let's get this whole distasteful business over with as soon as possible.

A copy of this letter has been sent to C.R., New Masses and The Nation.

Hayward, Calif. Lester Anderson.

Letters in Brief

The Boston Workers School will open at 919 Washington Street on October 14, E. Levin, secretary, informs us. There will be classes in a variety of political and economic subjects.

The Newark Photo League is now meeting every Monday evening at the Newark Y. M. and Y. W. H. A., High and West Kinney Streets. Membership is open to everybody, the executive committee writes.

The Birmingham International Labor Defense writes to call our attention to the fact that trolley-car employes there have refused to spy on militant workers as requested by the police. The letter also points out that the delegates of the National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners were arrested on their recent visit but that they were not held for trial.

Money is sorely needed by striking employes of Consumers Research, Dewey Palmer informs us. Funds may be sent to the Technical, Editorial and Office Assistants Union, P. O. Box 144, Washington, New Jersey.

Teachers of Vera Cruz, Mexico, have been on strike since September 2, Julio de la Fuente writes. They have had the support of other Mexican white-collar groups and are appealing for aid and sympathy from American teachers.

The John Reed Club School of Art is now open for registration for the fall term. The school is located at 131 West 14th Street, New York.

Merritt Crawford, president of the New Film Alliance, writes that the organization proposes to exhibit and distribute motion pictures dealing with the realities of the present social scene. Screenings will be presented to subscribing patrons only at the New School for Social Research. The address of the Alliance is 110 West 40th Street, N. Y. C.

Immediate protests to the State Department demanding the release of Lawrence Simpson, American seaman held in a Nazi concentration camp, are urged by the International Labor Defense. Simpson is being held in the notorious Hamburg Fuhlsbuettel prison described by former inmates as one of the worst of Hitler's jails.

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REVIEW AND COMMENT

Proletarian Literature

PROLETARIAN LITERATURE in the UNITED STATES. An Anthology. Edited by Granville Hicks and others. International Publishers. $2.50.

MR. JOSEPH FREEMAN opens this interesting and important volume with an introduction in which he defends the thesis of the social sanction of art. It is strange that such a position should be subject to question today. Art, and especially literature, have always been conditioned by the social status of the artist and by the culture of his age as determined by the class in control. Indeed, the chief theme of literary history since the Renaissance has been the emergence of the middle class, with modes of thought, material interests, ideals and manners quite at variance with those of the feudal aristocracy which it replaced as the vital element in civilization. Now that the middle class is declining in material prosperity, in religious conviction, in energy and in self-confidence, its characteristic political and social institutions showing signs of decay, it is natural to expect that the growth of the proletariat in class consciousness and faith in its mission will be attended by analogous phenomena in art and literature. It would seem impossible to read history in any other way.

Accepting Mr. Freeman's assertion of the reality of proletarian literature it is natural to compare this literature as exampled in the present volume with the treatment of the proletarian theme in the past. First is noticeable the absence of certain familiar conventions. One is the romantic conception of sex triumphing over class separation, resulting in promotion of the proletarian to the aristocracy as in Cinderella, King Cophetua and *Pamela,* or into the prosperous middle class as in hundreds of novels of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Though this theme survives in the pulp-magazines and the moving pictures, nowhere does a genuine proletarian writer condescend to the cheap romance of "She Married Her Boss." The romantic convention of religious consolation and compensation for the earthly suffering of the exploited working class, also common in the last century, is conspicuously absent. There is no "pie in the sky" for the proletarian writer today. A third romantic convention characterized the humanitarian literature of the generation of Carlyle, Ruskin, Dickens, Kingsley, etc.—that of a certain loyalty of the upper classes to the struggling masses below them. This note of interclass loyalty, resulting from the fact that books about the workers were written from above, is not to be found in the proletarian writer who writes for his own class. And finally the self-help theme which dominated so much of the fiction and biography of the past century does not appear in true proletarian literature. No longer do we find the working boy or girl seeking success through a sedulous pursuit of the education, interests and manners of the middle class. The bitch-goddess has ceased to lure them to her worship. Class consciousness has replaced individualism as a dominant force in life.

It will be recognized that the volume before us has a certain unity through its general representation of the literary values arising out of proletarian experience. The chief of these values is uncompromising realism. The whole development of modern literature has been away from the romantic, idealistic view of life favored by an aristocratic leisure class, and toward a realistic presentation of the actual exigencies and occasions of the world in which men work, suffer, live and die. The development of the middle class was marked by the steady advance of realism through the nineteenth century, restricted by the necessity of rendering experience in accordance with good manners and good taste, and even more fundamentally by the limitations of that experience itself. Between the violent dissipation of energy of the artistocratic barbarians on the one hand and the desperate struggle for existence of the populace on the other, the middle-class philistines enjoy a world essentially unreal, troubled chiefly by scruples of religious belief, morality and behavior. The present volume brings before us in unforgettable pictures the realities of experience in which the issues are life and death. Here are hunger, cold, disease, the suffering of helpless children, the spectre of unemployment, the humiliation of beggary, the battle of the picket lines, prison, torture, lynching. And above all rises an indomitable note of courage and loyalty, now and then articulate in verse.

The volume contains examples of the proletarian spirit and art in fiction, poetry, reportage, drama and literary criticism. Of these the selections under reportage are admirable for their rendering of fact, especially in the terrible situation recorded in "A Letter to President Roosevelt," by John L. Spivak, in Miss Agnes Smedley's Chinese sketch "The Fall of Shangpo," and Mr. Ben Field's "The Grasshopper Is Stirring." The fiction is best when it approaches the factual character of reporting, as in Mr. James T. Farrell's "The Buddies," Mr. John Dos Passos' "The Body of an American," Mr. William Rollins' "Strike," Mr. Michael Gold's "On the East Side." It is unfortunate that so many of the fiction pieces are excerpts from novels, torn from the context, though the excisions have been skillfully made. Under drama, Mr. Clifford Odets' *Waiting for Lefty* holds first place by virtue of its skillful use of the resources of a modern stage for the projection of what is essentially a mass struggle. The hero, as an individual, never appears. The selection from *Stevedore* has something of the same

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Proletarian Literature in the United States

AN ANTHOLOGY

Edited by Granville Hicks, Michael Gold, Paul Peters, Joseph North, Isidor Schneider and Alan Calmer. With a critical introduction by Joseph Freeman.

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large suggestion, but that from *They Shall Not Die* recall unhappy rifts in the defense counsels of the Scottsboro boys and has more of propaganda than drama. The literary criticism is proletarian in outlook and sympathy rather than in origin, except for Michael Gold's outburst against Thornton Wilder, which has the authentic note. In the poetry there is discerned too easily the same distinction. Genevieve Taggard, Isidor Schneider, Alfred Kreymborg, Kenneth Fearing are genuine poets, but one may feel sure that Aunt Molly Jackson, Ella May Wiggin and Don West are nearer the hearts of the workers.

On the whole, *Proletarian Literature in the United States* does credit to its editors and writers and will remain something of a literary monument at the beginning of a new age. ROBERT MORSS LOVETT.

Along the Oregon Trail

HONEY IN THE HORN, by H. L. Davis. Harpers. $2.50.

FIVE years ago H. L. Davis published in The Miscellany, a small, short-lived literary magazine, a novelette on the always fruitful theme of war and peace. Since it dealt in a direct way with a political question, an analysis on this story may throw a good deal of light on the thinking of the man who, with *Honey in the Horn,* has won the Harper Prize Novel contest and drawn upon himself the most lavish praise that the undiscriminating H. L. Mencken has ever given a living writer. The earlier novelette, foreshadowing the novel in some important respects, revolved around a harvesting scene in the Oregon plains, where an army of migratory farm workers, attacking the stands of wheat, labored together with a casual heroism that the author obviously found inspiring. Midway the story was interrupted by the reminiscences of one of the workers who had fought at the battle of Shiloh and whose account of that frightful encounter, with its panic, its butchery, its swelling streams of human blood that flowed like rainwater under the trees, established a contrast for the peaceful summer hardships of the harvesters.

The story was, inconclusively, little more than that, but it revealed on the part of H. L. Davis, as a distinguished poet turning for the first time to prose, two characteristics sufficiently rare in American writers to be memorable. It revealed an absorption with American history—and particularly a willingness to face those savage facts of American history that the sentimental nationalists, the professional pioneers, the Fourth-of-July orators and Paul Engle, commonly close their eyes to. The novelette also revealed that the poet was deeply responsive to the healthy satisfactions, the taken-for-granted heroisms, of day-to-day productive labor—for the whole meaning of his story lay in the contrast between the two pictures that were so quietly and effectively summoned up. On the one hand the richness of the common productive life; and on the other the bestialities of craven and desperate human destruction—the two images were set side by side, without comment, without subtlety, and the general effect was somewhat like that produced by the work of some honest and innocent primitive, such as Henri Rousseau, in which Age and Youth are contrasted on the same simple canvas. But two obvious weaknesses robbed this potentially fine story of its strength. The first was that H. L. Davis looked upon the Civil War with an imagination darkened and oppressed by a post-World-War disillusion; that he visualized the Northern soldiers in the Civil War as being unconscious of its aims and indifferent to its outcome, merely blind, helpless, panic-stricken, kill-or-be-killed bundles of sensitive and suffering human flesh. Failing to see the historic necessity of the Civil War, failing above all to understand that, despite its "horrors, cruelties, miseries and tortures" it was nevertheless progressive in that it aided in the destruction of the "extremely pernicious and reactionary" institution of Negro slavery—failing to realize this, the author was only conscious of the bleeding surface of struggle, of the unqualified horror of its isolated moments, and could thus only imagine the soldiers, sharing his own revulsion, being driven spiritlessly to death.

The second limitation, more directly relevant to *Honey in the Horn,* was revealed in the author's uneasy awareness that his portrait of the harvesters—of Peace—was not all that it should be. For their vital productive labor—or their joy and satisfaction in it—was sapped by one factor to which H. L. Davis attached little significance. It was threatened by the landowner, by considerations of the market, by the knowledge of foreclosures—in short, by the capitalist system, with all its leaks, its wastes, its sanctified and protected barriers against which the tide of production swells ever more strongly. That is to say, Mr. Davis wrote as if these men labored primarily and almost consciously to produce the essentials of life for humanity, and he attached no importance to the simple fact that they were compelled to labor primarily for the somewhat less inspiring purpose of swelling the boss's bank account. A protesting-too-much insistence on the manly satisfaction of physical labor, an exaggerated emphasis on the power of natural symmetries and greeneries to calm the questioning spirit—all this suggested that H. L. Davis was going out of his way in order to hymn the joys of honest work. He was considerably more squeamish in writing about the landlord than he had been in writing about Shiloh. But in order to draw a picture of Production to balance his picture of Destruction, he was compelled to minimize the pettiness, the trickeries, the dreary thieveries, the niggardly addition and subtraction, of capitalist-directed enterprise; he was compelled to minimize the nagging, the spying, the antagonism on one side and the sense of futility and resentment on the other that is summed up in the word—exploitation.

Now in *Honey in the Horn* H. L. Davis has drawn only half the picture—Peace—and conducted even graver operations on reality in order to plumb what H. L. Mencken calls "the secret of the pioneers." The novel is a story of pioneers a little belated—Oregonians of the years after 1900—and it is less a novel than a series of character sketches of odd, vicious, hard-working, loquacious or merely eccentric individuals scattered from Coos Bay to the Cascades, through the Wilamette Valley and along the Columbia. In an unnecessary foreword the author says he means to imply "no social criticism" and suggests "no social reform." Since nothing in the book makes him a candidate for the concentration camps and since he has already shown himself to be concerned with those perilous problems of war and peace, the disclaimer may be taken as the sign of a guilty conscience rather than as a blind to mislead reactionary critics. Superficially, the story deals with Clay Calvert, an orphan, who, after a complex and unconvincing run-in with the law, wandered over the territory until he fell in love with a horse trader's daughter and continued his wandering with her. Because he was on the run, Clay was compelled to adopt extreme measures to protect himself—he killed one innocent man, engineered the lynching of another and then discovered, in a queer O. Henry last-page burst of enlightenment, that his sweetheart had been guilty of two murders from ambush for the sake of money.

These pioneering gangsters are described sympathetically and their crimes are only gradually apparent. The reason for the emphasis on violence and brutality in the novel are obvious—Davis is writing in revulsion against the bombast of the professional patriots who picture the starry-eyed pioneers moving forever westward in order to fulfill America's destiny. He presents tough, self-seeking, restless, not very intelligent farmers, workers and jacks-of-all-frontier-trades living wearily—often miserably—in the midst of majestic mountains and broad valleys, entirely unconscious of the natural beauties that surround them. Here and there a furtive condemnation of the railway builders, the politicians, the landgrabbers and sawmill owners who are despoiling the country creeps in despite the author's determination to smother such social criticisms whenever they lift their ugly heads. But for the most part, as H. L. Mencken observes, "fundamentally nothing whatever happens," there is

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the raising of grain, the killing of deer and men—the whole turbulent drama of the settling of the frontier—is presented, not as part of a definite historical process, but as a confused, chaotic, senseless and eternal condition of life.

But for all their individual differences—and the large cast of characters includes horse thieves, Indians, bad men, hop pickers, hunters — these pioneers are alike in one strange respect. They are alike in their political unconsciousness. They may be shrewd and stealthy in appraising one another, they may be adept in generalizing about the characteristics of deer or Indians, but when they consider the ways of capitalists and politicians, the author discreetly draws the veil. The evasions are often grotesque. In one instance the settlers are starved out by a politician who has control of the warehouse, but if they are angry—or even a little mortified—the author never credits them with such emotions. In short, H. L. Davis, while presumably writing about pioneers by and large, has actually written about a very small and historically unimportant segment of them, avoiding with remarkable consistency any reference to the revolutionary vanguard of the working class and the politically enlightened members of the middle class who on the Western frontier far more clearly than elsewhere in the country immediately came into open conflict with the dominant capitalists and their local representatives.

It happens that Oregon and the West generally at the time of Mr. Davis' novel was the scene of some prolonged class battles whose implications were unmistakable. Leaving aside the long tradition of working class militancy — throughout the seventies and eighties the struggles of the Workingmen's Party dominated California politics and branches of the First International had been influential in San Francisco long before—leaving aside all this, Oregon settlers were then fighting the timber grabs against the railroad and lumber companies, fighting in some cases pitched battles with company gunmen. These aroused an antagonism certainly as widespread as that which has followed the killing of Mrs. Crempa in New Jersey in a comparable struggle. An investigation was conducted by John Reed's father—who was, incidentally, a settler of a type oddly omitted from Mr. Davis' book. Across the mountains in Colorado the Western Federation of Miners was fighting for its life—fighting so desperately and effectively that soon William Haywood was to be kidnaped and framed on a charge of killing a governor, in an effort to destroy the union. This made a little stir throughout the West similar to what we would experience if Earl Browder should be kidnaped to Louisiana and framed for the killing of Huey Long. From the precise country that Mr. Davis writes about came the first detachments of that mass movement of protest that is inaccurately known to bourgeois historians as Coxey's Army. Mr. Davis' characters are politically infantile, but large numbers of their neighbors were sufficiently enlightened to seize the trains, outwit the troops sent after them and cross two thousand miles of police-ridden country in a march on Washington. None of the characters in *Honey in the Horn* could do that. They could not even think of it. They would not even know there was a place called Washington. There is one last point. Oregon early in 1900 was receiving great masses of settlers of a type that Clay Calvert never encountered in all his travels—farmers foreclosed out of the Middlewest, miners blacklisted out of Pennsylvania, factory hands driven by unemployment from the mills of New England. They brought with them a tradition of spirited struggle that has persisted to this day, and in their early organizations and the pressure they exerted on the state government, they made history.

If Mr. Davis ever heard of these developments, he did not consider them of sufficient value to have a place in his fiction. And as you read of Clay Calvert moving so wildly over the turbulent land, retreating more and more deeply into the wilderness, you get an impression that he is not hiding from the police, but that the author is dodging an understanding of the class struggles of whose existence he is aware, avoiding the responsibility of making those "social criticisms" that automatically exempt one from winning a Harper Prize or the praise of H. L. Mencken.

JAMES HENNESEY.

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An Achievement in Two Arts

ONE OF US: THE STORY OF JOHN REED, by Lynd Ward and Granville Hicks. Equinox Cooperative Press. New York. $2.

I BECAME acutely aware of how badly needed was such a book as this when an undergraduate at a large eastern university told me of a recent talk that had been given to the students there, on the life of John Reed. I was interested. Why was this university, notoriously reactionary, arranging for a lecture on the life of John Reed? The answer came quickly enough when I asked what the gentleman had told them. It seems, according to the impression this student received from the talk, that Reed was a brilliant but erratic sort of fellow who had possibilities but came to a bad end when he fell afoul of the radicals. The lecture must have been very, very informative and accurate, because this boy who had listened to it had never heard of *Ten Days That Shook the World.*

In providing a brief "outline" biography of Reed this book assumes immediate importance by virtue of the wide and growing interest of the public in the author of *Ten Days That Shook the World.* The rapid acceleration of the forces of revolution gives steadily increasing stature to this pioneer of the American Proletarian Revolution. The fact that even a reactionary college finds it necessary to give the students "information" about this colorful figure attests to the growing need for a clear, easily-readable, honest account of Reed's life and work.

One of Us: The Story of John Reed, provides all of these requisites and more. It is an exciting and inspiring story, an achievement in two arts, the prose narrative by Granville Hicks, the picture narrative by Lynd Ward, beautifully blended in a stunning piece of bookmaking such as one rarely finds among average-priced books.

With skillful selection and superb economy Hicks has compressed into thirty paragraphs the highlights of Reed's revolutionary career. If the tempo of present-day life, especially city life, is such that one has time enough only to "read as you run," it is all the more important that we shall be able to present the revolutionary truth in brief, clear and effective manner if we are to reach large sections of the public. To choose from the great wealth of material which is Reed's life story the determining and significant aspects and events, and present them in a manner that integrates and gives meaning to all the parts, is an achievement of which Hicks may well be proud.

Ward's lithographs are vigorously conceived expressions of the dynamic energy that characterized Reed's life. Composed with skill, they are fine examples of his ability to design the page as well as the drawing—a talent not frequently found among illustrators. His feeling for mood and ability to convey emotion place him well above the level of illustrators of incident. The many fine qualities of these drawings are so palpable that one regrets the several shortcomings which tend to make them somewhat less than completely satisfactory. The most serious weakness, to this reviewer, is the dead flatness of the tone quality. Missing here is the luminosity of Ward's wood engravings, with their rich blacks. Seldom is the granular quality of the stone utilized to anything like its full textural possibilities. It is no small tribute to Ward's ability that despite these shortcomings the drawings stand up well and make a distinct contribution to the effectiveness of this important and beautiful book.

STEPHEN ALEXANDER.

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Working-Class Unity—Bulwark Against Fascism

REPORT TO THE SEVENTH WORLD CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL, by George Dimitroff. 96 pages. Workers' Library. 10 cents.

WHEN future historians consider this period they are certain to locate the Comintern among the main sources of world advancement and deal with its congresses as major historical events. Of these congresses the Seventh, just concluded, is certain to count as one of the most important. It made history, visibly, during the sessions with delegations from sixty-five countries assembled, a number of them representing new revolutionary parties inducted into the world movement at this congress. It is making history daily, affecting as it does the decisions and programs of the labor movements throughout the world, the social force with whom historical destiny lies. Of the aftermaths of the congress such repercussions as the diplomatic notes exchanged between Moscow and Washington and other imperialist capitals will be of secondary importance.

The delegates assembled constituted the picked cadres of the revolutionary parties. At the congress they were given a renewed sense of the world-wide sweep, the rigorous discipline and the unity of the revolutionary movement. Every sort of mass struggle from the open offensive of the parties in democratic countries to the underground activities of the parties in fascist countries, were represented; and every type of national organization from the exultant, socialism-building peoples of the U.S.S.R. to the oppressed colonial peoples with their national liberation yet to be achieved. They carried back the decisions of the congress, to their peoples, as directives. To a great extent, therefore, the history of the near future will have been determined by these proceedings at Moscow.

Dimitroff's report on the offensive of fascism and the United Front against fascism, probably the most significant of the four main reports given, is consequently of incalculable importance. It will probably rank in final estimates with the annunciations of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin and in immediate effects it may be of even greater consequence than these, for the political movements it is addressed to are matured and its conclusions affect the direction of humanity immediately throughout the world.

If, therefore, Dimitroff's report were the driest political document, written in the most professional Marxian terminology, it would still be compulsory for every mature human being who recognizes the obligation and the privilege of identifying and understanding what is, in effect, a prospectus of immediate world history, to read and digest this work. The report, however, far from being a formal political document, has the confident forthrightness and ardor characteristic of the leading manifestoes of the revolutionary movement. The logic of its structure is not presented in the skeletal forms of premise and conclusions, but each conclusion is developed from the actuality from which it reaches. The expression throughout is vigorous and stirring. The dignity, the controlled passion, the grave revolutionary wisdom that marked Dimitroff's heroic Reichstag Fire Trial defense is here. Yet, there is more, Here we have not one man's passion and one man's wisdom in one man's words. We have the passion and wisdom of the most rigorous thinking and courageous body of men in the world; a wisdom and passion drawn from innumerable conflicts, triumphs and martyrdoms.

What is the specific historic significance of the Seventh World Congress? At the Sixth World Congress, held in 1928, the world economic crisis was forecast and the resulting increased tension in imperialist rivalry, deepening insecurity, spreading hardships and unrest, maturing into wars and uprisings. The program laid before the revolutionary parties of the assembled nations at that congress was acted upon. Though not fulfilled to its maximum, it led to a growth in the numerical strength of the revolutionary parties in most of the capitalist countries, and to increased tactical skill and steeled revolutionary vigor of the parties in all capitalist countries.

Since then the movement of history has been in huge steps. The crisis of the capitalist system has forced upon it desperate measures to save itself, in a number of countries by open terrorist dictatorship. Fascism, the extreme form of capitalist reaction, has a hold in several countries and is an imminent menace in others. The political setting of the world is one in which the capitalist world, in reaction, drives upon the masses who, with or against their will, are being politicalized and pulled into the current of political action.

This situation offers both drastic challenges and great opportunities. Class-conscious elements in the working class are now tensely aware of its need of unity and the danger of its divisions. And the previously unstirred sections of the masses are now virtually compelled into action as, on the one hand, their condition becomes more desperate, and on the other, capitalist demagogy offers promises and palliatives. The program is therefore to solidify the working class, and to unite with it the equally threatened farm population, and white-collar workers, professionals and intellectuals; to replace wherever possible, propaganda by action and to accomplish this, to be wherever the workers are, even in the fascist shop councils in the fascist countries, clarifying their situation to the workers, encouraging them, developing their immediate demands, directing action and letting it become the workers' school of revolution.

Dimitroff has performed a feat of compression in his presentation of the comprehensive program worked out at the congress and in the space available in a review it is possible only to indicate the main lines. First is the decision to make the anti-fascist drive the immediate aim of the world revolutionary parties. The capitalist world is marshalling the forces of reaction. Fascism is its vanguard. To thrust it back and to defend the democratic rights of the masses becomes paramount among the objectives of the world revolution.

Foremost among the measures to achieve this is the United Front. All groups threatened by fascism are to be drawn together and to oppose their joined strength to this monstrous product of nightmare and savagery, with which terrified capitalism hopes to save itself, even at the sacrifice of all the gains of civilization. Had the United Front been achieved earlier, civilization could have been spared the fascist horror, for it is obvious now that fascism is not and never was inevitable. The capitalist reaction has won its successes not only by its own strength, but by the weakness of the divided working class. Unfortunately, at these crises, decisive sections of the working class were in the Social Democratic parties, the leadership of which, through its policy of class collaboration, yielded position after position to the bourgeoisie, even treating with the fascists; while, at the same time, they remained uncompromising in their hostility to militant anti-fascist elements, making a feeble gesture of unity when all had been lost. In fact, where Social Democratic leaders held office in municipal or state governments they frequently used their power to suppress elements hostile to fascism, with measures that sometimes reached the proportions of massacre. Had the working class instead closed its ranks, had it drawn to its side its natural allies, the farmers and the white-collar workers, it could have defeated the coups of the reactionary elements and turned the action into a seizure of power by its forces. However, in Germany, in Austria and Spain the United Front was not entered into, or entered too late. The Social Democratic parties under the misguidance of their leadership gave their strength to their enemies. On their part the Communist parties made serious errors; they were frequently sectarian; they were overconfident of the revolutionary instinct of the workers which needs more than agitation to develop it; they underestimated the national sentiments of the masses and their indignation against the enslaving terms of the Versailles peace; and they were slow in initiating activities covering the needs of the farmers and the white-collar workers, misunderstanding the vacillations natural to their special position in the social stratum. At times, as in Poland and Finland, they failed in their estimates of the situation and allowed themselves to be taken by surprise by the fascist coups.

By these hard lessons, however, the working classes have been taught a number of

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truths, above all the need of unity. In Social Democratic parties and in labor organizations there has arisen a sweeping sentiment for the United Front. The reality of the class struggle has been cut into their being by the wounds of unemployment, the lowered standard of living and the bayonet answers of the militia to their protests. The illusion that capitalism would take them into partnership, would ever deal with them on better terms than those of exploiter and exploited, is nearly done with. There is a deepening consciousness now everywhere among the masses of workers that their divisions must be ended! In France the immediate danger has compelled even the leadership of the Social Democratic party and a commanding section of the petty-bourgeois Radical Socialist party to enter the People's Front; and there the United Front has already won significant and heartening victories. Elsewhere the insurgent rank and file is increasingly entering the United Front, with or without the sanctions of the leadership.

Dimitroff's report not only covers every major field where the United Front is possible and every force that can be drawn into it, but makes penetrating analyses of the needs of particular countries, pointing out how the different conditions in each call for differences in tactics. Dealing with the United States, for instance, he says: "It is a peculiarity of the development of American fascism that at the present stage it appears principally in the guise of an opposition to fascism, which it accuses of being an 'un-American' tendency imported from abroad. In contradistinction to German fascism, which acts under anti-constitutional slogans, American fascism tries to portray itself as the custodian of the constitution and 'American democracy'." As if in echo of this, Belgrano, at the American Legion Convention at Cleveland, shouted that there was no room in America for European "isms" and "Hitlerism and Fascism," along with "Communism and Socialism"; there was room only for Americanism. Dimitroff emphasized the need of a third party in America as the essential political weapon of a people's front, America not yet having developed in its political life a numerous mass party formally and outrightly representing the workers' interest.

The discussion of the situation in France, where a People's Front has already been formed, is, naturally, one of the high points of interest in the report. After paying deserved compliments to the precedent-creating French Communist party, Dimitroff reveals the still menacing realities of the situation. Battles have been won, but not the war.

While a fascist coup has been prevented, the government still permits the free development of the fascist movement. The most powerful fascist organization, the Croix de Feu, has a strength of 300,000 armed men, 60,000 of whom are officers in the reserve. It holds strong positions in the army, the air force, in government offices, in the police. Although numerically small as opposed to the many millions enrolled in the People's Front, its connections with the government, its openly acknowledged links with the metal and armament industries, its backing within the church, give it a strength beyond numbers. What is needed next in France is to supplement the political unity of the anti-fascist forces with unity in the trade unions, to draw into firmer alliance the peasantry and the petty-bourgeois masses, to force the government to disarm the fascists and to turn them out of the governmental offices and army posts where they have been allowed to entrench themselves although avowed enemies of parliamentary government; to direct the anti-fascist drive against the reactionaries in the Catholic Church and to build anti-fascist committees in the army.

Dimitroff speaks, necessarily, for the Communist side in the appeal for a world-wide United Front against the capitalist reaction. The frankness of his presentation and the courageous realism of his analysis are equally remarkable. He makes very clear and precise the conditions under which the Communist Parties act in a United Front; he leaves no question about the fact that the objective of tht Communist Party remains the overthrow of capitalism; he lets it be understood that in the achievement of the United Front the Communist Parties will not only have vacillations of its partners to contend with, but vacillations in its own memberships, borne by sectarians distressed by contacts with the "impure" and by lingering Right opportunists to whom the United Front may become an end in itself and to which they may be willing to sacrifice the integrity of their movement and the greater objective. ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

Music

An Interview with Hanns Eisler

HANNS EISLER, having turned his back on an offer from a British film corporation, has come to America to devote himself to the problems of revolutionary music. Specifically, he will conduct courses at the New School for Social Research which may well prove of vital import to the future of proletarian music in this country. He regards this undertaking as an immediate duty to the art in which he stands preeminent: "If I can open the road to six—even to two—pupils, all my work will be worth while."

At the beginning of our talk, he urged me not to speak of "proletarian music." It does not yet exist, for the very good reason that the workers of the world have too many pressing problems of existence to afford the time to create a proletarian music. Nor are there teachers available to aid them in assimilating the classics of the past, to prepare them to build the new. His present purpose, Eisler feels, is to lay the foundations for a proletarian music of the future. At present, he urges, it is wiser to speak of "revolutionary" music.

And of this he had much to say. It was impossible to get him to talk about his private troubles and triumphs during a busy summer all over Europe. His illness, his difficulties, Gorki's reception to him in Moscow, the honors accorded him in France and Czecho-Slovakia — he thrust them all to the background, being too full of the exciting progress of revolutionary music in Europe.

At Strasbourg in June, for instance, was held an International Workers' Festival devoted chiefly to choral music, over which (he omitted to mention) he presided. Strasbourg has now assumed the musical leadership that fascist Germany and Austria have renounced. "At Strasbourg we discovered both our weakness and our strength. Our strength is the hunger of the workers for culture—a hunger as strong as that for bread and milk, and for which they will fight with equal energy.

The resulting benefits at Strasbourg were several. The representatives of workers from each country heard the music from the lands of other workers. The commonality of their interests was thus forcibly brought home to them. But, even more important, the point that the composers were *their own*—the workers'—composers, making *their* music, was strikingly exhibited throughout the Festival.

No less interesting were Eisler's observations at Reichenberg where a National Workers' Music Festival was held for Czecho-Slovaks. The circumstances surrounding it were sufficiently dramatic. The fascist party had just won important victories in the elections. Yet, almost under the very noses of Hitler's storm troopers (Reichenberg is five kilometers from the border), this defiant working-class festival took place. Eisler found the proceedings almost "piquant." The Czecho-Slovak population is part German and part Czech. It was an answer to fascist crowing, that the German workers were at great pains to speak Bohemian and the Czechs to speak German. The Czechs played Wagner, the Germans Smetana. This solidarity expressed in terms of musical activity was an unexpected counter-blast to the fascist propaganda of race hatreds. The workers of both racial strains made a point of showing their comradeship and fell on each other's neck—their response to the electoral success of the Nazis. TONY CLARK.

Hanns Eisler's course of fifteen lectures on "The Crisis of Modern Music" is addressed to the layman; his course in "Musical Composition" is for composers particularly interested in vocal music.—THE EDITORS.

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The Theater

"Paths of Glory" Dramatized

THIS department is not in the habit of weeping over Broadway's fiascos, nor do we usually palpitate with eagerness when a new production is brought forth. But after the sincere impassioned gibberish of Dr. Holmes' *If This Be Treason,* the announcement of *Paths of Glory,* the dramatization of Humphrey Cobb's novel, was enough to make us heady with hope. Here at least was the material for an intensely truthful play documented by facts of the last war. The dramatization had been assigned to a skilled craftsman, Sidney Howard. The production was in veteran hands (Arthur Hopkins').

But after the curtain rose and fell on the opening scenes (*Plymouth Theater*) we began to wonder when the play would begin, if at all. Privates and generals brush about the stage in half-hearted almost-encounters. Lukewarm speeches play the obligatto to equally luke-warm action—while the cosy voice of an organ tries to tie the scenes together with mystic minor chords. Gradually all that has occurred becomes clear—but one can't help wishing that the back-stage wind-machine would turn on the script and blow the cobwebs out of the speeches.

General Assolant, madly ambitious and tempted by his superiors, has decided to throw his tatterdemalion regiment into a desperate attack on The Pimple, a German stronghold that has already withstood two attacks. Under the circumstances the move means suicide: half the regiment is cut down by enemy guns. But the half-crazed Assolant saves face by blaming the failure on the men, indicts the regiment for "cowardice" and orders that three soldiers be shot "as an example."

And suddenly the play comes to life. The pitiless machinery of the military court whirls headlong with murderous precision. It blasts through the unimpeachable innocence of each of the victims by one technicality after another until the stunned men have lost even the strength of desperation. In these scenes the play rips along with terrific drive; the action fairly shakes with pent-up intensities. And in the final waiting-for-death scene, added details of horror fairly save it from an anti-climax.

Obviously these are the materials for a bitterly significant war drama, and one can only marvel that everyone concerned has collaborated toward its ruin. The court-martial scenes hit the mark surely and squarely, but the larger framework of the play collapses into niggardly pieces. Mr. Howard, whose personal war experiences have surely left him no illusions, seems to have missed out completely in his characterization of Assolant and he has been helped along by as superficial direction as has ever bungled a performance. Instead of giving us a meaningful Assolant, one driven both by personal ambition and ceaseless high-pressure from his superiors into a recognizably fatal move, Howard makes Assolant an inspired nit-wit. Instead of exposing the court-martial frame-up as a credible consequence in the functioning of the war-machine, he makes it appear an abnormal outgrowth of a sensational series of events. Juxtaposed against a humane colonel who strives to defend the victims (an innovation on the novel by Mr. Howard), General Assolant looms as a pathological sport. It is this abnormalizing of the central character that reduces the magisterial significance of the entire action: it makes *Paths of Glory* an atypical episode rather than the dramatic epitome of the relation between the rank-and-file and officer classes.

"Why are we here?" asks one of the privates during a get-together on the eve of the attack. "Why this war?" asks another. And a third, after an interval of glum talk which says something about this war being "for the people," adds, "But we are the people"—and immediately begins to discuss other things with the same glum casualness. Is this the talk of men frazzled and embittered by months at the front who are aware that they are about to be cut down by enemy bullets? Is this the desperation and fury of men trapped? Not a single rank-and-file soldier emerges as a solid character; they all move across the stage like so many hulks of wood who have learned nothing after months of blood and suffering, nothing but to stand up and die for the sake of their dear ruffian-run-amok, Assolant.

Listening to *Paths of Glory* and watching it bungle one fine opportunity after another, one remembers the hard, shaggy dialogue of *What Price Glory?* and the tragic pathos of the scene before the attack in *Journey's End.* One thinks longingly of what the left-wing theater could do—and I hope, still can do—with the materials of *Paths of Glory.* For one thing, we would make sure that the adaptation involves more than pouring the contents of the novel into the play-mold; it would mean reincarnating the novel in drama. And left-wing audiences may be sure that the scenes in No Man's Land would be something different from the Hopkins-Dreyfuss mixture of off-stage noises bouncing against a screen of mellifluous baby-blue.

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Author Trouble at Warners'

ROBERT FORSYTHE

AFTER a series of triumphs having to do with Hooray for the Army, Hooray for the Navy, Hooray for the Irish and Marion Davies, the Warner Brothers have got round to Art. Not only have they discovered it; they have practically surrounded it and captured it. The furore which has accompanied the producing, promoting and exhibiting of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* could, if properly harnessed, have prevented the Ethiopian War. It revealed that not only were the Warner Brothers conscious that they had done something admirable but that they were scared to death by their bravery. After $1,500,000 had been spent, the full force of the idea descended upon them that they were not only tackling Shakespeare but also fantasy, the two Deadly Sins of the Cinema. The result has been a frantic campaign joined in by the entire film industry, including the office of Mr. Will Hays and the assembled battalions of press agents of all persuasions and degrees of competence. Briefly, if *A Midsummer Night's Dream* doesn't go, Art is through in the movies.

To the credit of the Brothers Warner, it may be said that they have done their part. They have engaged Max Reinhardt to direct the picture and Herr Korngold to adapt the music of Mendelssohn. They have lavishly thrown in every actor on the Warner lot. The fact that many of them are not actors doesn't alter the generosity of the gesture. The Warner Brothers have given the picture every opportunity but they have run into a difficulty which has often thwarted them: author trouble. The truth is that judging from its showing in this one film William Shakespeare will not do in Hollywood. I say nothing about how *A Midsummer Night's Dream* read in the original script or how it played in the stage version. I know only that as a film it is a nonsense fable and the great bore of the century.

The greatest limitation of the screen is that it is compelled to show too much. It is also its greatest strength but not when doing fantasy. Because the stage is unable to do much more than hint at the forest and the fairies, the imagination of the spectator has a chance to create his own pixie world. In the movie it is not possible to hint at the forest and the whirling vapors and the downy tufts of turf; they must be there for all the world to see. But when you can see them, they become ridiculous. The whirling vapors become nothing but a cloud of steam pumped up by a crowd of stage hands, the flittering nymphs become nothing but a ballet trained by Albertina Rasch, the prancing in the moonlight becomes as embarrassing as the little groups of dancers who leap aloft on the lawn at summer college sessions.

What saddened me most was the collapse of the comedy. I had always thought that the strolling players were pretty funny and when it was announced that James Cagney was playing Bottom and such excellent gentlemen as Frank McHugh and Joe E. Brown were to accompany him, I sat back in expectation. Since I will die rather than admit that Mr. Cagney is not a great actor, I must blame it on Shakespeare or Reinhardt. Something is wrong and it isn't me and it isn't Cagney. It isn't even Joe E. Brown. I will laugh at Joe E. Brown in an ordinary comedy, which is about as far as anyone should be expected to go in proving a sense of humor. Just to be on the safe side, I'm going to blame it on Reinhardt. The scene in the cellar when they are rehearsing is always on the verge of being funny and the scene in the castle during the performance before the nabobs is funny because of the contrast of the players in that elegant setting but it is so horsed about in direction that it loses the fine goofy effect it needs.

If anything can save the film it will be Mickey Rooney who plays Puck. Reinhardt does his best but he can't quite ruin Mickey. The kid is a typical little Harp with a mocking laugh which would drive a giraffe mad and he is practically perfect for the part. Reinhardt, by the way, is going to do well in Hollywood. If one laugh by Puck is good, he must have not fifteen extra laughs of the same general tenor but five hundred. If a few clouds of steam are effective, he must have clouds of steam repeated at intervals of seconds over a period of what seems days. Reinhardt is colossal, he is gigantic and his direction in this picture is pedestrian and unimaginative and dull.

Who else is in the picture I don't remember. There are a host of lads and ladies dressed in court costumes and of course the two young couples who get all balled up when the magic curse is put upon them, but it all matters very little. They wander about in the woods and Mr. Cagney wears his head of an ass with the aplomb of one who can play in anything and there is the fairy queen and the tough Oberon and miles of fantasy and gauzy ladies and I wished to heaven it would end so I could get out into the God-given exhaust smoke, clatter and literal hellishness of Broadway.

But this is not to say that it will not be a success. It is going to be a success or everybody at Warner Brothers is going to get fired. The publicity push behind the film is tremendous. It makes one realize what will hap-

HORSE SHOE BOTTOMS

By TOM TIPPETT

Says **Robert Forsythe:**

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pen when the movies really get into their fascist swing. The film is being used as a study course in thousands of schools. If you look closely you will see long lines of students, with their quarters clutched hotly in the palms of their hands, marching down to the movie house to do their part for culture.

This feature of the business interests me very little, however. I'm more concerned with the future of the movies. If *A Midsummer Night's Dream* fails as Doug and Mary failed in *The Taming of the Shrew,* it will be final proof to the intellects of the industry that the people will not support good pictures. Because a play which Shakespeare himself could surely never have taken as anything but a pot-boiler fails to succeed with a modern audience, it will prove to Hollywood that the age of the public is short of nine and that anything more intellectual than *Top Hat* cannot hope to make money. Secretly, I hope they prove it. If there is anything I don't want Hollywood to do it is to begin dealing with ideas. There was a time when I cried for a more serious Hollywood approach to art but I'm aware now of my error. Any radical who urges them to deal with current problems or current ideas is crazy. By the very nature of the industry—its tie-up with the big bankers, its dependence on exhibitors of every blend of intelligence and every prejudice, with its fear of the moron and the churches, they are forced to keep on the side of general opinion, forced to deal with events of importance in a way which cannot help being obviously or insidiously reactionary and fascist.

Anyone who has read Time with any regularity should have been aware of the fascist tendencies of the Yale brethren of that periodical long before this. To be astonished at it now in the *March of Time* films is a bit naive. But quite aside from any doctrines they may [illegible] individuals, try to contemplate, if you will, a screen approach of any other sort from a company wishing to have general film distribution. The *March of Time* is raw and clearly prejudiced; the others are prejudiced because of their very positions in the capitalistic order.

Between Ourselves

HANSU CHAN, editor of China Today, contributes an article to next week's issue on the situation in the Far East, in its bearing on the world war danger. The importance of an analysis of Japan's imperialist plans may be gauged by the following quotation from Col. Keni Matsumoto, Japanese Military Attache in Washington, made the other day in the Pearson-Allen Washington column: "Manchukuo is a very nice country, but it has no gold. The martime provinces (Eastern Siberia) have gold. They also have fish, timber, many things Japan needs. When we get ready we shall take them. This will be the first result of the Italian-Ethiopian war."

Several members of THE NEW MASSES staff are among the editors of *Proletarian Literature in the United States,* the first selection of the Book Union. The list of editors: Granville Hicks, Michael Gold, Isidor Schneider, Joseph North, Paul Peters and Alan Calmer. The introduction is by Joseph Freeman.

The illustrations in this issue with John Reed's "America, 1918," are from *One of Us: The Story of John Reed,* published by the Equinox Co-operative Press, 444 Madison Avenue, New York. The publication date is October 17, the anniversary of John Reed's death.

Heywood Broun used to work on The New York World, a newspaper that died.

A section from *Weaver's Son,* by Martin Russak, which was the second choice of the judges in THE NEW MASSES-John Day Prize Novel Contest, will be published in THE NEW MASSES shortly.

William F. Dunne is in Atlantic City at the convention of The American Federation of Labor and will write about it.

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